

PlayStation 3 PS2 PSP 演劇端末

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PLAY



The UK's bestselling independent gaming magazine

ISSUE NO 194
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MORTAL KOMBAT

**MOTORSTORM:
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ASSASSIN'S CREED:
BROTHERHOOD



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Gran Turismo 5

The dates, details and dimensions

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INFAMOUS 2

Sony unveils the most ambitious open-world adventure ever made

3D gaming

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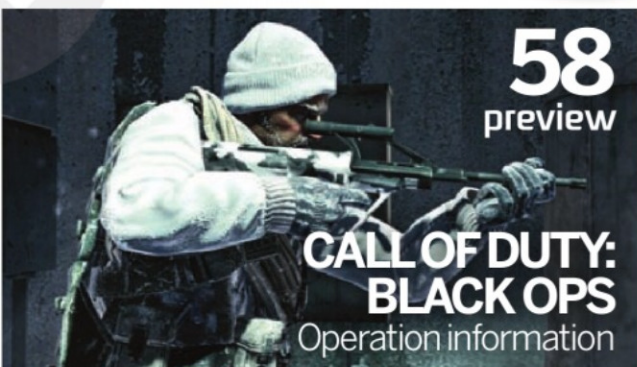
GRAN TURISMO 5

Sony's seminal racer in 3D

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Welcome PLAY

The UK's best independent PlayStation magazine

Game on for Sony



For many the best time of the year is their birthday or Christmas. But for those who love their games the best time of year has got to be the few days in the middle of the year when

E3 comes to town (well, LA to be precise), where publishers and developers alike start to spill their secrets about what they've been working on and, perhaps more importantly, when we'll

The PS3 has evolved into an entertainment behemoth

be able to get our hands on it. Every year each of the major console manufacturers try to convince us of why its product will bring the most entertainment, amusement and limitless joy to our lives, but to Sony we say save your breath, you had us at hello.

Over the past few years the PlayStation 3 has evolved into the all-round entertainment behemoth Sony always promised and has recently given us games that are the envy of the videogames industry. Yes, there have been bumps along the road but on the whole we've

got what we paid for – nevertheless that doesn't mean it can afford to stand still and judging by what I saw at this year's E3 no one knows this better than Sony.

Looking over the pages of this issue it looks like a fully filled wish list for the year ahead for fans of just about every genre you care to mention. Racing fans have the unfathomably awesome *Gran Turismo 5* and chaotic *MotorStorm: Apocalypse* to look forward to, the likes of *Crysis 2* and *Killzone 3* are in store for shooter fanatics and for acolytes of the RPG there is *Final Fantasy XIV*. The return of *Mortal Kombat* will get fight fans' juices flowing and *LittleBigPlanet 2* should keep modders busy for months – and did I mention you'll be playing most, if not all, of them in 3D?

Twin all this with the return of a revitalised Cole in the hugely popular *inFamous* franchise and you've got more games and innovation than you can shake a motion-control wand at. Thank you, Sony, you complete us.

K. HENNESSEY Editor

contributors



Darran Jones

Darran went on holiday this month but it started off badly when he went to the toilet just before his train was due to leave. He chased it, though, managing to grab hold and get dragged along the entire platform going "Ooooooh!" before getting pulled on board by the guard. His wife, Betty, was not best pleased.



Simon Miller

Miller went to Canada where he managed to tick off ice hockey, maple syrup and the words 'about' and 'eh' on his list of Canadian things to see, eat and hear in Canada. Sadly, he failed to see, eat or hear any mounties, moose or maple trees. He did meet a Canadian who asked him what a blur card was for in football, though. Weird.



Tom Hopkins

Tom's been on his travels this month, too, visiting both the Italian city of Florence and also the wight isles of The Isle Of Wight. The most interesting thing about the Isle Of Wight Festival for Tom was that he took his coat, but it turned out to be quite sunny in the end so he had no reason to wear it. He also found time to see The Strokes.

the PLAY promise

Play solemnly swears (raises right hand) to bring you the best PlayStation magazine that is humanly possible.

We will always bring you the most in-depth, impartial, honest reviews and will never bow down to PR or advertising pressure. We have some of the most experienced reviewers in

the industry and we're not afraid to use them. And we take our own screenshots so you can see what the game looks like when you play it. We will be the first to break the biggest stories, the first to cover the biggest games and in the most detailed way. We will only ever bang on about the very best PlayStation games, the ones that we would pay our own cash for. We aren't afraid of expressing an opinion, especially when it's for your benefit.

So don't expect our previews to simply regurgitate a load of internet or press release tosh – we'll be telling you whether a game is looking good or not, regardless of the stage of the code.

We want to fuel your passion for gaming like no other magazine and we want you to trust everything you read here. If you don't then you can simply stop buying it. That's how confident we are that you'll love Play. Promise.

PLAY

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Where fact + opinion ÷ PlayStation = the truth

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Sony still trying to convince developers on 3D

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"How much of playing Guitar Hero was because you had never used a guitar controller before?" – Brian Fleming, producer and co-founder of Sucker Punch, p. 10

E3 2011 will take place from June 7-9

THE FUTURE REVEALED

Sony shows us how PS3 will change how we game at E3

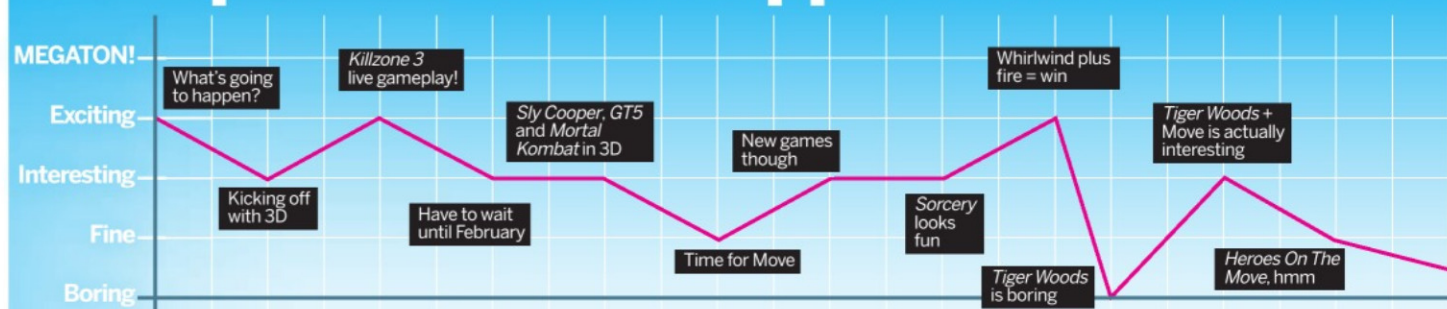
1 The Third Dimension

Sony's commitment to 3D was well known before E3 began but we didn't really realise what sort of impact it would wind up having on not only Sony's upcoming games, but those of third-party publishers as well. *Killzone 3* knocked 3D out of the park with a stunning display involving some great live gameplay as well as stunning effects. Some went so far as to say it was better looking than *Crysis 2*, which will also be available in 3D on PS3. Throw in *MotorStorm: Apocalypse*, *Gran Turismo 5*, *Mortal Kombat*, *Sly Cooper Collection* and *Ghost Recon: Future Soldier* and that's a number of reasons to jump on 3D gaming.

2 Time To Be Moved

Brushing aside all the casual games that it had already revealed and given the press had hands-on time with it before E3, Sony instead decided to reveal how Move could offer hardcore gaming experiences for true gamers. *Sorcery* showed the action adventure potential of the controller's functionality, while *Tiger Woods* showed off the crazy levels of accuracy Move can offer. Updates to games like *Resident Evil 5*, *Heavy Rain* and the addition of Move to *Killzone 3* is a clear statement of intent. Move is about more than party games and flapping around. This controller can be used for so much more than that and E3 finally proved it.

E3 Experience As It Happened



Need To Know IMPORTANT GAMING NEWS YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS



Rising To Get Multiplayer?

MGS: Rising producer Shigenobu Matsuyama has revealed that Kojima Productions is considering an online component to its upcoming game. "We won't make the game without online, but we're still considering what element of online to put in the game," he told us.



Ubisoft Leading On PS3 Consoles

Ubisoft is leading development of all its upcoming titles on PS3, not on 360 or PC as in the past. *Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood*, *Driver: San Francisco* and *Ghost Recon: Future Soldier* were all shown on PS3 and developed on PS3 first before converting to other systems.



Street Fighter IV inspires Twisted Metal

David Jaffe told **Play** that his key inspiration for *Twisted Metal's* latest venture into online multiplayer has been inspired more by *Street Fighter IV* than *Call Of Duty*. Jaffe described *Twisted Metal's* Nuke mode as "kinda Mortal Kombat meets Unreal Tournament."



Homefront is looking like an exciting alternative to the likes of *Call Of Duty* and *Medal Of Honor*.

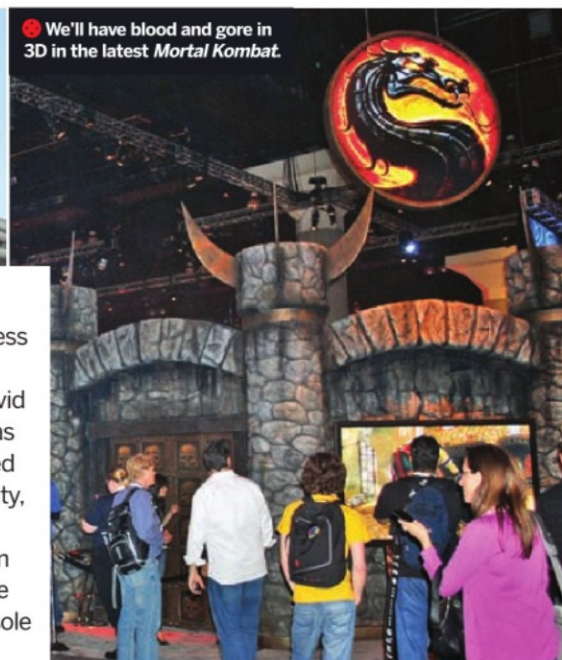


3 Everyone Loves PS3

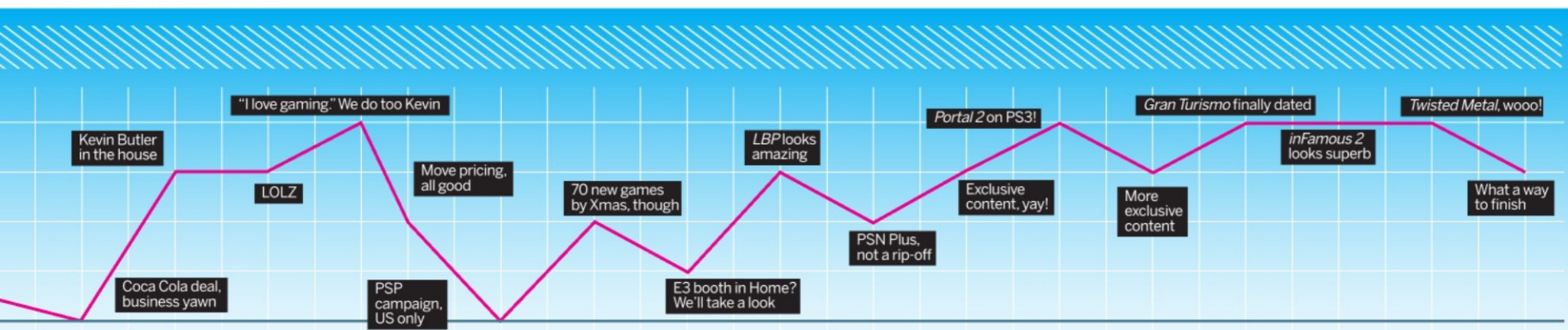
Lots of exclusive content was announced at E3 for PS3 from titles like *Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood* and *Medal Of Honor* (detailed over the page), but the big announcement here was *Portal 2* being confirmed for PS3 along with Steamworks support from Valve. What that means in reality is the ability to share created content via Steam, something only PC players could do in the first *Portal*. It will also give you access to Steam Cloud so you can save your progress on Valve's servers, go over to a friend's place, login to Steam and continue playing without having to use a USB stick or download anything. It's the future of mobile gaming.

4 PS3 Is So Metal

Twisted Metal isn't a series that has had much success in Europe, but if you've ever listened to the Play Podcast you'll know that everyone on the team is a big fan of it. David Jaffe, creator of the original *Twisted Metal* games as well as the much more successful *God Of War* series, has returned to the car combat game with even more online functionality, crazier gameplay, more brutal set pieces and absolute freedom to create utter carnage. As the final showing from Sony at E3 it hammered home the message that for all the new features like 3D and Move, the PS3 will remain a console for hardcore gamers.



We'll have blood and gore in 3D in the latest *Mortal Kombat*.



Games On Move

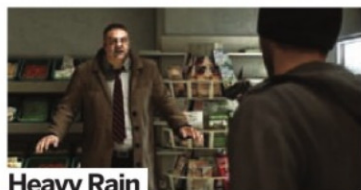
New titles confirmed for Move functionality



echochrome II



Tumble



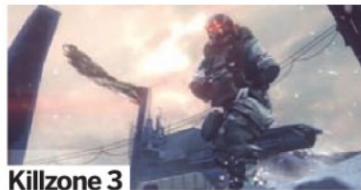
Heavy Rain



SingStar Dance



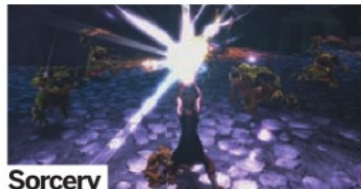
Sly Cooper Collection



Killzone 3



Heroes On The Move



Sorcery



Time Crisis: Razing Storm



LittleBigPlanet 2



STAT ATTACK
5.2 million
times Dissidia: Final Fantasy has been downloaded illegally in Japan

Another Dimension To inFamous 2?

Does Sucker Punch have an interest in 3D and Move?

With *MotorStorm: Apocalypse* making the move into a third dimension and *Killzone 3* getting some Move support, it seems that Sony exclusives are flocking to the new tech available for PlayStation 3, but is Sucker Punch with *inFamous 2*? The people we spoke to expressed an interest, but were coy on whether or not such new features would be making an appearance in the blockbuster sequel.

"We're always interested in new stuff," Sucker Punch producer and co-founder

Brian Fleming told us rather ambiguously. "A certain percentage of the videogame business is driven by novelty. You want to have an experience you've never had and use a controller you've never had. How much of playing *Guitar Hero* was because you had never used a guitar controller before?"

It's an interesting question and for his part game director Nate Fox likes having these new features to play with in his mind, opening up new ideas for his games. "We're not talking about how *inFamous 2* ties into those things if at all, but it's exciting and

it's certainly stuff that we look at," was his expertly worded response. "I'm glad it exists because it just gives me as a game designer a greater variety of paints to paint with and more options and ways to find fun."

But Fleming had the final word on the matter. "We look at each one and try and figure out how we can play the best hand available," he said, drawing a line under the subject. "Whether that's 3D or Move, the Sixaxis, our job is simply to take *inFamous* and those things and see how and if we can bring them together to the best of our ability."

Media Molecule Trusts You

LittleBigPlanet 2 is waiting for you to exploit it

Speaking to *Play* at E3, Alex Evans, co-founder of developer Media Molecule, told us that he has learnt to trust the gaming community with *LittleBigPlanet* and that exploiting bugs and weaknesses in the game is actually a good thing, so long as they're exploited for the right reasons. For him it's the way in which

LittleBigPlanet can throw up the unexpected that makes it special.

"We're happy for people to find bugs in *LittleBigPlanet 2*: as long as it's not used for evil, as long as it's not used for griefing, then it's okay," Evans confided to us. "The sign of a good tool is when it gets used in ways you didn't expect. If you watch someone play

guitar or use Photoshop, no two people do it the same way... same with *LBP*."

However, Evans also said that it took the first *LBP* for him to trust gamers with Media Molecule's creation tools. "The one message I got from *LBP* is trust the gamers to be creative. I was nervous, but we had no reason to be worried in the end."

EXCLUSIVE CONTENT CONFIRMED

The blockbuster games giving PS3 a little extra



MEDAL OF HONOR

As well as the PS3 being the lead development platform for *Medal Of Honor*, the game will also get an exclusive special edition on PS3 that includes an HD remake of *Medal Of Honor: Frontline*.



DEAD SPACE 2

PS3 will get a special edition of *Dead Space 2* that includes an HD version of *Dead Space: Extraction*, the awesome Wii-released rail shooter, which will use Move as its control system.



MAFIA II

The PS3 version of 2K's organised crime sequel will launch with exclusive DLC, including missions that won't be available on 360. That should make the PS3 version a much deeper experience.



ASSASSIN'S CREED: BROTHERHOOD

Not only will PS3 get exclusive single-player missions, but PS3 owners will also be the only ones to beta test *Brotherhood*'s new multiplayer gameplay.

3D Already Winning

Sony says consumers light the way to 3D's success

Speaking to *Play* at E3, Sony Computer Entertainment CEO Andrew House admitted Sony still has to convince developers and publishers to put 3D at the heart of its game design. He believes that the process could take up to two years. However, he also expressed his hope that experiences such as *Avatar* have already done the hard work in convincing consumers and most importantly PS3 gamers that 3D makes entertainment better.

Game makers need to think of 3D as part of the game experience

"What I think is important is that we start to encourage game makers to think of 3D as part of the game experience and that we try very hard to make it as easy as possible

to build it into that game development process as we can," House said. "We have a dedicated team with a worldwide remit based in the UK looking at exactly that, on 3D games and looking to source that expertise and spread it out into the development

community. So that's going to be the challenge for the next year or two."

3D gaming requires a 3DTV to see it, though, but House doesn't think the cost will

be much of an issue since people are already accepting the extra cost associated with 3D entertainment in all its forms. "It's interesting that not only have 3D movies become a new standard – especially for young people as entertainment – but also that they've demonstrated time and again that consumers are prepared to pay a premium price for 3D content," he told us. "So to me it seems the consumer is demonstrating they see value in it, and by essence we need to be led by where consumer tastes are going."



E3 QUOTES

"Gaming is having a ridiculously huge TV in a tiny, one-room apartment"

– Kevin Butler, Sony

"At the Bulletstorm party. Game looks hot!"

– Randy Pitchford, Gearbox, via Twitter

"At Sony e3 Conf backstage. Herman and Steven from Guerilla killed it on stage. Such great fx work in KZ3!"

– Alex Evans, Media Molecule, via Twitter

"LittleBigPlanet 2 looks like one of the most brilliant, innovative things I've ever seen. @Media_Molecule should be so proud."

– Casey Malone, Harmonix, via Twitter

MotorStorm Apocalypse puts gamers in charge

While 3D functionality is grabbing most of the headlines, Evolution Studios revealed to *Play* that custom playlist creation and mode tweaking could well be the biggest addition to the MotorStorm franchise in MotorStorm: Apocalypse. Speaking exclusively to us before E3, Apocalypse's game director Simon Barlow expressed his excitement at being able to give players the power to create their own game modes in the fourth game of this series.

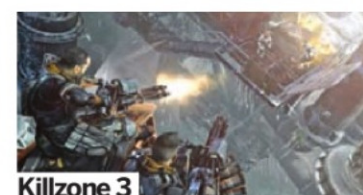
"[The game creator] allows players to string together simple rules, effectively, to combine them and create their own game modes from scratch," Barlow said. "It uses a really intuitive, icon-driven interface, and you're making logic statements, effectively. You're saying here's an action and a reaction – so when I hit a big rig, trigger this event, the big rig explodes."

Evolution will even give gamers access to modes and customisation options that the development team hasn't used for its own

levels, meaning genuinely new tracks and modes are possible. "There will be far more options available for the player than we have used," Barlow revealed, but insisted it still had to be an easy system to use. "This thing has to be accessible, because if it's not accessible you're going to find 10-15 per cent of the populace are going to make game modes and no one else is going to touch it. But it's got to be deep enough that people can make really unique, interesting game modes – and we want people to share them."

Games In 3D

The new games confirmed for 3D on PS3



Killzone 3



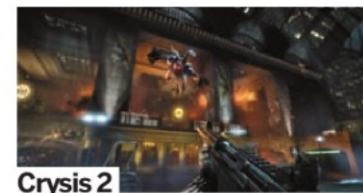
Gran Turismo 5



MotorStorm: Apocalypse



Mortal Kombat



Crysis 2



Tron Evolution



Shaun White Skateboarding



NBA 2K11



Sly Cooper Collection



Ghost Recon: Future Soldier



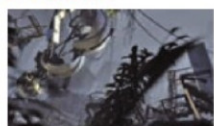
QUESTION?

Why Did Valve Change Its Mind On PS3?

AS WE DISCUSSED last issue as we looked at *Half-Life 2: Episode 3*, Valve has not been shy in its criticism of Sony and the PS3 and yet at E3 Valve said the PS3 would have the best console version of *Portal 2*. What changed?

Money In The Bank

The PS3 was very expensive, but since the Slim arrived people have found it to be better value. That goes for developers too who can see a better user base on PS3 now than existed before.



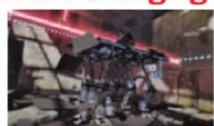
Core Tech Is Proven

In 2007 Gabe Newell said: "The PS3 is a disaster, Sony has lost track of what customers and developers want." Now, gamers are flocking to the PS3 as developers unlock its true potential.



The Times Are A-Changing

At E3 Newell said: "We're going through a transition from entertainment as a product to entertainment as a service." Meaning games don't end with the disc, but include post-release support.



Steam Powered

Steamworks is Valve's system for updating its games and content. By allowing it to use this service rather than PSN, Sony is giving up its certification process and presumably some of the money from DLC. It could also mean PS3 gets user-generated levels in *Portal 2*.



Time Makes More Converts

Valve was the most vocal sceptic about the PS3 on launch. It thought the PS3 had gone too far, but now it's at the heart of what's happening in gaming.



ANSWER:

The time was finally right. PS3 is showing us the future.



STAT ATTACK
18.15 million copies of GTA: San Andreas sold between 2004 and 2009

Cry Freedom

Crytek aiming for global domination with Crysis franchise

There's more to the *Crysis* brand than its games according to executive producer Nathan Camarillo, speaking exclusively to *Play* at a recent EA event. With the title coming to PS3 (in 3D no less) for the first time later this year, *Crysis 2* marks the beginning of a franchise expansion that will go on to include all sorts of new products, such as books, comics and perhaps even more. Even the fact that *Crysis* is coming to consoles for the first time is a sign of this expansion as Crytek looks to take on the likes of Infinity Ward and Bungie as a global development force.

"There's stuff we're doing that I can't say specifically, but we're going to expand," Camarillo said. "I mean, we're a franchise, so this isn't just 'this is *Crysis 1*' and then 'hey, let's make a *Crysis 2* - we're building a franchise and a juggernaut here.' And with people like author Richard Morgan writing for the game as well as being a vocal supporter of the project it's easy to guess where future spin-offs might come from."

"There's going to be a lot of supplemental material that comes out, and you can imagine with the kind of collaborators we have, and have worked with - and will

continue to work with - that there's going to be all kinds of nice pieces to go along with the title to expand the fiction of the universe," Camarillo teased.

All of this is part of a broader plan, however, to expand *Crysis* as a brand and put its developer Crytek on the global map alongside other heavyweight console developers. "With *Crysis 2* we really want to open up," admitted Camarillo. "*Crysis 1* was really about the hardcore enthusiast PC market just because of the requirements to run the game, so obviously we're broadening the market just by offering it on consoles."

PLAY TEAM TROPHIES

Things the Play team has achieved this month



PLATINUM: DAN

Had his PS3 break with Editor In Chief Aaron Asadi's copy of *Red Dead Redemption* inside. It's stuck in there and Aaron doesn't know.



GOLD: GAVIN

Managed to pull off his best ever Killstreak in *Modern Warfare 2* in a free-for-all. He got up to 24 kills in a row. Well done.



SILVER: KEITH

Thought he'd completed *Red Dead Redemption* in record time. Actually he was only about a third of the way through and had just got to Mexico.



BRONZE: IAN

Got the third fastest time while playing *MotorStorm: Apocalypse* having held the lead all day, but lost in the dying moments of the event.

The Making Of A Legend

Tomb Raider creators reflect on the Lara Croft phenomenon

Speaking exclusively to our sister magazine *Retro Gamer*, *Tomb Raider* creator Toby Gard and Core Design co-founder Jeremy Heath-Smith offered their recollections of how Lara Croft became the globally recognised icon that she remains today.

For a start Lara began life as a stubby man, but after being told to go back to the drawing board Gard found his muse. "I was told I should consider including three other character choices," he revealed. "From there I designed the girl character and I simply couldn't go back... I remember taking inspiration from various places and characters at the time like Tank Girl and Neneh Cherry."

After a few more changes (she started out as South American) Lara was born and thanks to her the PlayStation boom began. "Sony

have gone on record to say that *Tomb Raider* was a cornerstone product to show off what the PlayStation could do," Heath-Smith explained. "It was phenomenal because it not only sold hardware for them but also sold software for us."

What was more phenomenal was how *Tomb Raider* began to creep into popular culture seemingly faster than any videogame before it.

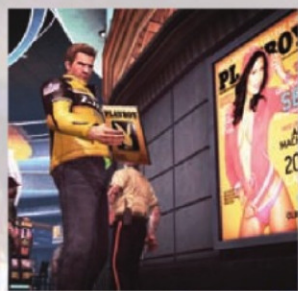
We got blamed for David James losing goals at the England game

Heath-Smith was amazed by the level of attention Lara Croft was getting, even in mainstream media. "We got blamed for David James losing goals at the England game because he was up all night playing *Tomb Raider*," he admitted. "I would love to say that it was a really dynamic PR machine that kicked into gear, but it really wasn't like that at all."



Read the rest of *Retro Gamer's* exclusive feature in issue 78, out now

REASONS WHY...



THEY'RE BRINGING SEXY BACK Where in *Dead Rising* 'sexy' meant taking a photograph of a lady zombie's crotch, in *Dead Rising 2* it means lots of adverts for classic issues of *Playboy*.



THEY KEEP THE DUCT TAPE INDUSTRY ALIVE Without zombies there would be no need to duct tape things together to make weapons – like this awesome sledgehammer with three axes taped to it.

Zombies aren't dead in *Dead Rising 2*



THEY DO THE FUNNIEST THINGS One of the funniest things in *Dead Rising 2* is flying a remote control helicopter near them. They get attracted by the lights and go right up to them, but then get their heads cut off by the plane's blades. That's what we call a chopper!



KILLING THEM IS FUN Killing zombies will always be a lot of fun. That's why we need zombies in our lives and ultimately why they will never die – they make us feel alive.



THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF THEM There were thousands of zombies in total in *Dead Rising*, but in *Dead Rising 2* you can face thousands of zombies at once. If ever anyone needed proof that zombies are very much alive... just look at the numbers.

WHAT WE WANT TO SEE

What's the PSN missing? These few things at least

1 Cheaper PSP

games: Sony is doing its best to cut the cost of



PSP games offered via PSN seeing as it has no packaging costs to cover, but some third-party games are actually costing more on PSN than in the shops. That's ridiculous and should be dealt with ASAP.

2 More Dreamcast games: Yes, *Crazy Taxi* and *Sonic Adventure*



have been announced, but we're greedy. We want more Dreamcast games on PSN and we want them yesterday. Which we guess means we want them on Dreamcast, which they already are. But ignore that, we just want them.

3 Home 2.0: Is it

just us or is Home starting to feel a little



stale? Was it always stale? Content has become better over the last few months, but we think it could really do with a revamp. A fresh start might be the best thing for it.

4 Indie love: It was good

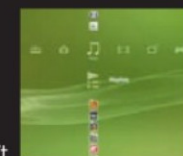
to see a few quirkier games appearing for PSN at E3 again this year, but



we want to see more independent gaming love. PSN should be a playground for weird and wonderful ideas.

5 Custom look: You

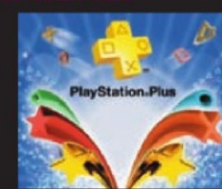
know you can create custom PS3 themes,



right? If you don't there's a guide for it on our DVD, but what if you could do it all through a PS3 theme creator on PSN? Wouldn't that be better?

WWWT5 news:

Did you hear about PlayStation Plus? No? Well you can read all about it



and how it will affect your gaming life in Play Investigates on page 24. It's essential reading.

YOUR SAY

Will you be going 3D?

3D WAS A huge part of Sony's E3 showing this year and Sony seems convinced that despite the added cost of a new TV, gamers will lead the way into 3D in much the way we already have for HD and Blu-ray. The question remained, though, how do *Play* readers feel about it all, so we asked and the verdict was mixed.

I think the price will have to drop for people to consider 3D – **UberCool_UberGoff**

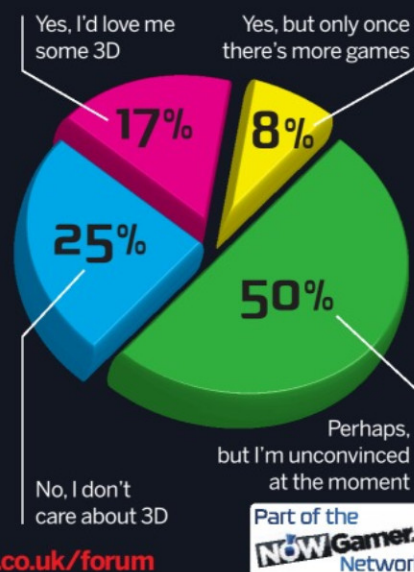
Shutter glasses aren't any good anyway, polarised is the way to go. I'm waiting till LG bring out their 3D TVs – **Mr healey**

If I won the lottery then I would, but I guess I'll have to hope the price drops for now – **Talking Yak**

When the price comes down, then maybe but currently it's very niche. I can't deny I'm interested, though, it will be AMAZING when it becomes standard – **the bossman**

I'm not made of money, dammit. Maybe in a few years after my poor old TV has crapped out and died and 3D TVs are cheap old hat – **Lummy**

Join the Play Nation by signing up to our forum at www.play-mag.co.uk/forum





● The developer plans to make *Rising* more accessible to those who are new to the franchise.

Metal Gear Solid: Rising

Q&A We talk to Shigenobu Matsuyama, creative producer, and Mineshi Kimura, director, of Kojima Productions about MGS: Rising



● Slicing your way through *Rising* seems to be a key mechanic.

Will we learn about how Raiden became a cyborg?

Yes, that will be in the story of *Rising*.

Will we see classic *Metal Gear Solid* elements – such as long cut-scenes?

It's not a Hideo Kojima game – Kojima was very famous for storytelling themes, with the messages and the humour.

Raiden is a little bit darker than the character we know – he cuts people like crazy

I'm not trying to do the same thing. This means there's more emphasis on a different approach. This time it's a katana sword action game at the core.

Will sword battling make up most of the game? Will other techniques/styles be available?

What I'm thinking is there's a two-layered battle system – of course it's a sword action game, so the sword combos in the sword action is one layer. But the other part is like the part you saw in the video where he kicked and put the guy off balance, then it goes into slow motion where you can aim more precisely where you want to cut.

How far do the environmental attacks go?

What you saw in the trailer is possible – even back in R&D there was a very tall building you could cut and slice down. But then we thought the balance of the game would be destroyed. So at this stage we thought we should not do it so much. We haven't really defined the correct answer yet.

Will there be any other types of weapons available?

Yes, we're planning to have other weapons. How you use the other weapon and the sword is another fun element we're trying to implement.

What kind of multiplayer, if any, can we expect in *Rising*?

We're still considering this aspect. We won't make the game without online, but we're still considering what element of online to put in the game.

When was *Rising* conceptualised? Was it a plan relating to the ninja dream sequence in *MGS 3*, or something unrelated?

We always wanted to do something with the main character as Raiden. But if we just say we want to make the main character Raiden that doesn't create a game. So first we thought more on the technology side, where we thought we want to create a system where we can cut at will and cut wherever we want. We started research on that and found that it was quite successful. So we thought if it was cut at will, we should use a katana. Then it was an obvious fit that the main character would be Raiden.

Will *Rising* follow the chronology of other *Metal Gear Solid* games? Will we see returning characters?

The storyline is between *MGS 2* and *MGS 4*, and how it unfolds is we have the

human Raiden from *MGS 2* and we want to show how he became the Raiden we know in *MGS 4*. In the trailer you saw that Raiden is a little bit darker than the character we know – he cuts people like crazy, it's like he's insane. So we want to draw how he became [like this] and what happened to him between *MGS 2* and *MGS 4*. We're probably not going to show so many returning characters in *Rising* because, since it's a new part of a series we don't really want to [reference] the *Metal Gear* saga so much. We want newcomers to come in and play more freely without knowing the background of the whole *Metal Gear Solid* universe.

What will boss fights be like?

What we can say right now is that we will have boss fights and we're going to have a lot of variation in our boss fights.

Are you planning to make it more focused on the action rather than

the cinematic experience?

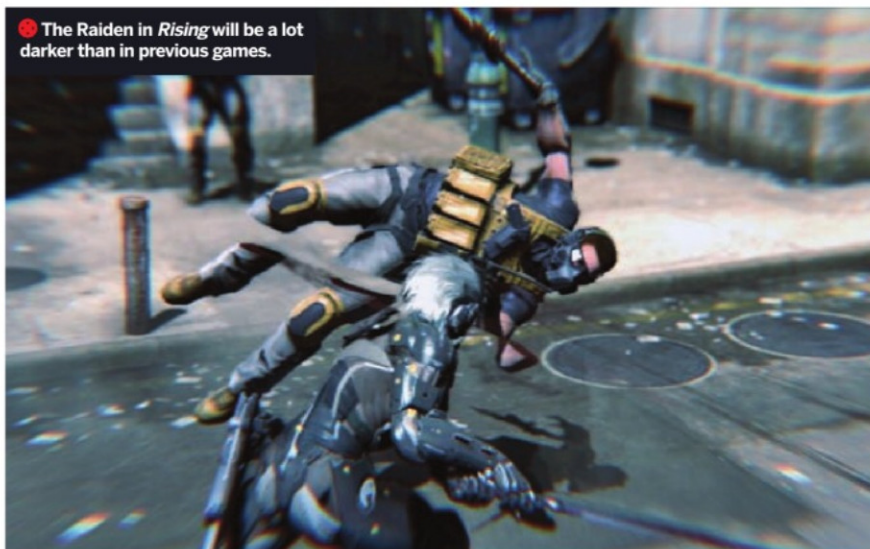
We want to focus on the action. We will have cut-scenes as well – however, the volume of them will be much less. We don't want to stop the flow of the action, and also the story – the story is very important and we will have a very strong story. Also we're not thinking of making the story super complex, it's more of a simple story we'd like to present.

So it's more accessible for a larger number of people?

Exactly.

What kind of environments will we be facing? We've seen labs, research facilities – how deep will these backgrounds go and how will they connect to the fighting system?

We want to have a lot more variation, but we can't at this stage say it will be set at this stage or in this environment. We will disclose this information in the future.



● The Raiden in *Rising* will be a lot darker than in previous games.

Another Band In The Wall

Green Day: Rock Band producer reveals Pink Floyd game wish

IN AN EXCLUSIVE chat with **Play**, Harmonix producer Alan Moore, who recently finished up work on *Green Day: Rock Band*, revealed that the band he would most like to see gracing a future *Rock Band* title is Pink Floyd. The classic progressive rock outfit has been on many *Rock Band* fans' wish lists and even recently made the cut on a Harmonix poll on its official forums asking what bands fans would like to see get a dedicated game in future. Moore explained why he's backing Floyd to be on the list.

"One experience that would be great would be to play the whole of *Dark Side Of The Moon* – that would just be an epic thing," he told us. However, Moore's interest in a Pink Floyd game is no confirmation that it will happen. For the time being Harmonix is still talking with bands to set up its next dedicated project.

"We talk to loads of different bands about projects and we can only make a very small number of games, so we're going to choose bands that our fans want to see," Moore insisted. "One of the reasons we did *Green Day* is it lines up so well with our fans. Our fans grew up with Green Day. But it's got to be a band that has a really deep music catalogue, it's got to be a band that's interesting and one that's into what we're doing and willing to work with us."

STAT ATTACK
\$113 million
in profit made by
Activision Blizzard
in 2009



Shifting Gears

Driver: San Francisco to go head-to-head with online FPSs

During a recent visit to Ubisoft Reflections to see its new *Driver: San Francisco* title, studio founder Martin Edmondson told us a little about how multiplayer was at the heart of the game's design and how he hopes the game's Shift mechanic could attract interest online. The Shift mechanic is an interesting addition that allows you to switch cars on a whim and it required the Reflections team to work on single and multiplayer simultaneously to get it right.

"Shift had to work across both the single-player and the multiplayer," said Edmondson. "Shift is not a function that

got tacked on to a game design – we didn't design a bunch of missions and say, 'oh, Shift is a good idea, let's try and make that work.' The problem is that giving players the ability to switch cars while in online games means closer control and management of all the in-game traffic.

"The multiplayer element of it dictated certain aspects of how the game works in terms of the traffic management and so on," he continued. "You have to synchronise a city full of thousands of cars between multiple players. That dictates how you handle your traffic management system, which dictates how you handle it

in single-player as well.

In terms of gameplay it doesn't make much difference, it's just the work involved has to take it into account."

Edmondson is hoping that all this extra effort will help to single *Driver* out as a very different online experience that can take on the dominance of the FPS games on PSN. "The thing I think it has going for it is it's very different," he said. "It'll be an interesting direction to come at it for multiplayer. But obviously a driving game competing with an FPS – that's an uphill struggle – but I think we'll change people's perceptions of driving games online."

Read
our hands-
on impressions
of *Driver: San Francisco* on
page 62

Charts

Cataloguing everything that's big in the world of PlayStation

PS3 CHART

- 1 Red Dead Redemption**
Rockstar
No shifting Rockstar's *Red Dead Redemption* as its sales remain strong this month. **92%**
- 2 2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa**
EA
World Cup fever has got stronger in the last few weeks, but perhaps it will decline soon. **70%**
- 3 God Of War III**
Sony
GOW III refuses to bow before the likes of *MW2* and keeps a firm grip near the top of the chart. **88%**
- 4 Modern Warfare 2**
Activision
A little surge in interest for Infinity Ward's latest as new content keeps the game alive a bit longer. **94%**
- 5 UFC Undisputed 2010**
THQ
No questioning the way that *UFC* has managed to establish itself as a powerful gaming force. **88%**
- 6 Demon's Souls**
Namco Bandai
It took its time, but PS3 gamers have found it in themselves to embrace this modern classic. **92%**
- 7 Lego Harry Potter Years 1-4**
Warner Bros.
Traveller's Tales is in good form with this outing that taps back into what made Lego titles so fun. **79%**
- 8 Blur**
Activision
A strong marketing campaign from Activision has really helped to put this game on the map. **86%**
- 9 Split/Second**
Disney
Black Rock's racer has really taken off. It'll be interesting to see how it gets on against *Blur*. **90%**
- 10 Battlefield: Bad Company 2**
EA
Global sales for *Bad Company 2* were recently put at around 5 million, a superb feat. **93%**

PSP CHART

- 1 Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker**
Konami
You can't keep a good Big Boss down it would seem as he storms to the top of the PSP chart. **92%**
- 2 2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa**
EA
Much like its PS3 brother, the World Cup game on PSP is still going strong due to the tournament. **65%**
- 3 ModNation Racers**
Sony
The Play, Create, Share spin-off is building up a good following of its own at the moment. **70%**
- 4 LittleBigPlanet**
Sony
We're all waiting on the announcement of a sequel, but Sackboy keeps doing the business on PSP. **90%**
- 5 Gran Turismo**
Sony
The sheer quality of this game is what keeps it in the charts and we doubt the release of *GT5* will affect it. **85%**

*This chart is compiled from sales, our opinions and the games you're playing. If you're playing a recent, quality title that isn't on our chart, head on over to the forum and let us know about it.

INSTANT EXPERT

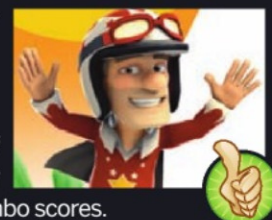
All of the pros with none of the prose



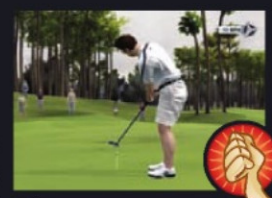
DOS & DON'TS

Important lessons from Play this month

DO: Devote your entire summer to playing *Joe Danger* and master the art of trick chaining for the ultimate combo scores.



DON'T: Expect too much to be different with *Tiger Woods 11*. It's not exactly a franchise known for massive overhauls.



DO: Get some mates around and harmonise through *Green Day: Rock Band*, otherwise you won't get the best of the game.



DON'T: Start skipping meals to get all the studs and secret items in *Lego Harry Potter*. There's plenty of time for all that.



Read our reviews of all these games starting on page 91

PLAY CREATES, SHARES WITH... MODNATION RACERS

This month's Play creations from the big games on PS3



DR MANHATTAN While having *Watchmen*'s only true superhero wearing pants is rather controversial we don't think we'd get away with having his bits and pieces dangling in a family-friendly game like *ModNation*.



SCOTT PILGRIM You'll be seeing and hearing a lot more from this guy in the coming month as he stars in a movie based on his comics. It's been made by Edgar Wright, the mind behind *Shaun Of The Dead*, so expectations are high.



LADY LIBERTY Since we couldn't be bothered to draw her robes we decided that Lady Liberty should go for a casual look. We're sure that if she was hanging around karting tracks today, she would look like this.

ModNation Racers was reviewed in Issue 192, available from the Imagine eShop

Made something cool in a game?

Send an image to play@imagine-publishing.co.uk and share it with the world.

THREE DIMENSIONALLY MIFFED



Ready or not PlayStation 3D is here

OUR MAN IN JAPAN

PlayStation pondering from the East

I wrote a couple of months back about how much I hate 3D. That hasn't changed, but Japanese devs are still trying to push it. Konami is releasing a 3D version of *Metal Gear Online* in Japanese arcades. Nintendo has its new 3D handheld coming and Sony... well, Sony wants to sell 3D-equipped BRAVIA TVs. It wants those sets flying off shelves and it's using PlayStation to make it happen.

Sony's 3DTVs are on display in even the smallest Tokyo electronics stores. If you want headache-inducing three-



I Didn't Do It

Dark Void and the new *Bionic Commando* failed to perform at retail, and Capcom is pinning it on foreigners. In an interview with the *Financial Times*, Capcom president Haruhiro Tsujimoto said that his company would only employ foreign studios for sequels from now on. All original IP would be developed in-house in Japan. *Dark Void* and *Bionic Commando* were both developed outside of Japan, but so were the highly successful *Bionic Commando Rearmed* and *Super Street Fighter II Turbo HD Remix*.

dimensional golf, all you have to do is take a short walk to your local shop. 3D games are a bit harder to find.

As if to give its 3D games a glamorous aura, Sony rented out a cafe on some of the most expensive real estate in Tokyo and turned it into what it calls the '3D dot cafe.' The cafe featured a playable version of *Gran Turismo 5* as well as demo videos for the 3D versions of *MotorStorm 2*, *Killzone 2* and *WipEout HD*.

After watching and playing these games, I figured out why 3D gives me a headache. In the real world I can change the focus of my vision at will. When I want to focus on something far away, the foreground gets blurry, but when I change my focus to said foreground it becomes clear. 3D glasses trick your brain into perceiving depth when there is none, but they also control what objects are in focus. So when I want to focus on an object in the fake 3D space my brain perceives, but the game or movie designers have decided that I should be looking elsewhere, the object doesn't come into focus. It stays blurry and my brain says to my eyes, "you tricked me, here's a headache for your trouble."

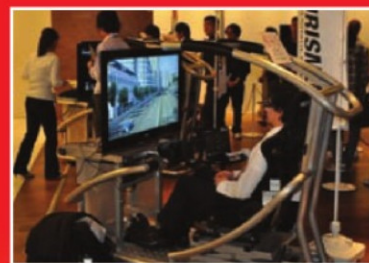
GT5, thankfully, keeps everything on the screen crisp and clear and playing the game didn't make me feel as if daggers were being shoved into my eyes. The *MotorStorm* and *WipEout* videos kept things nice and focused as well. The *Killzone* video, on the other hand, was like

In the real world I can change the focus of my vision at will

an ice pick to the brain. Taking its visual inspiration from a late-Nineties Korn music video, the *Killzone* trailer follows the path of a bullet from space marine to Helghast eye. The focus of the camera is always on the bullet, if you want to look anywhere except where the creators want you to you're screwed because it's blurry like looking through a dirty pint glass. The game itself may play nice with the focus, but I wouldn't count on it.

Mark my words, the 3D craze of today is going to be looked upon in the future as one of the dumbest ideas since the Virtual Boy. Until someone gives us a glasses-free 3D display with no headaches, it's never going to take off.

Gran Turismo 5 works well in 3D, with everything looking crisp and clear.



In The Driving Seat

As 'cool' as 3D *Gran Turismo 5* was, the star of the 3D dot cafe was the Recaro Racing seat. This nifty device featured a racing wheel, gearshift and a force feedback seat. Driving in it was more immersive than any 3D display could hope to be. Surrounding the seat was an enclosing cockpit that puts previous GT peripherals to shame. The downside is there was no word on price or availability in Japan, Europe or elsewhere.

OBJECTS OF DESIRE

The bits, bobs and other bits that make us geekily warm inside



Electronic Rock Guitar Shirt

\$29.99 at ThinkGeek.com

A T-shirt which is a fully playable guitar? A T-shirt which is a fully playable guitar?! A T-shirt which is a fully playable guitar?!? It plays all the major chords and all you need is a few batteries, and... well... we need to sit down. This could be the greatest thing of all time.



Pac-Man: Retro Game Sweets

£5 at Play.com

It was Pac-Man's 30th birthday recently – while he doesn't look a day over however old a faceless circle could look, we should still celebrate. Frankly, the perfect way to do so is right here – chomping down on some power pills and ghosts of your own, and they're not even of the dodgy kind.

England Supporters Pack

£5 at Play.com

Show your pride for the English national team after their stunning performance in the World Cup, where they came home with their heads held high and the respect of the nation. Or: buy this kit to burn it after the English national team proved – once again – they're a bunch of overpaid, bottling idiots.



Wampa Rug

\$149.99 at BigBadToyStore.com

Come September we will all be able to live in a much more decadent world – one in which we can adorn our living rooms with wampa-skin rugs. The snow beasts from the arctic tundra of Hoth may have taken Luke Skywalker by surprise (and eaten his tauntaun), but there's nothing to fear with this toasty room decoration.



Grey Warden's Sword Letter Opener

\$14.99 at BigBadToyStore.com

We all struggle opening letters, which is why letter openers were invented in the first place. But why settle for a boring, standard opener when you can pick up a seven-inch replica of a Grey Warden's sword to unleash your gas bill with? Do be warned, though: you probably can't slay Darkspawn with this, so don't even try.



CONDITIONS: Enter discount code when placing order. MySoti.com discount code only valid on featured items between 8 July and 4 August. Visit MySoti.com for even more great T-shirts.



Toast Busters

\$20.00 at MySoti.com

The design made us laugh and it's a pun – why on earth wouldn't we recommend this tee? We're suckers for the combination.



Laser Cat 2

\$18.11 at MySoti.com

Cat owners rejoice! You now have something you can wear that mocks how idiotic your feline friend really is! DOGS RULE!



IN FOCUS

Things to see and do before the next issue of Play arrives



Transformers: War For Cybertron/Tiger Woods PGA Tour 11

Developer: High Moon Studios/EA Sports **Publisher:** Activision/EA Sports
Release Date: 25 June/2 July

SUMMER. THE DRY season. There isn't much on the horizon but the threat of hayfever and the expectation of having to go outside. As such it's hard to find one game we really recommend, so we've gone with these two: one looks like it will be a bit of fun with stompy robots, the other is *Transformers*! But seriously, nobody wants any major games in the summer, so these two should be ideal while you wait for the summer to end and something better to arrive. Either that or you can just continue playing *Demon's Souls*.



Predators

Distributor: 20th Century Fox **Director:** Nimrod Antal
Release Date: 22 July

FORGET ABOUT ARTISTIC merit, just remember that watching eight-foot-tall alien hunters stab humans and skin them alive is wonderful, summery entertainment. The synopsis for *Predators* – mercenaries, yakuza and general bad people end up in jungle, get hunted by predators – certainly has us hopeful.

American Slang

Artist: The Gaslight Anthem **Label:** SideOneDummy **Release Date:** Out now

THE LATEST STEP in The Gaslight Anthem's route to world domination comes in the shape of *American Slang*. The folksy, punk-infused sound of the band appeals to fans of Bruce Springsteen as well as those who just like good music. Should be a great summer album for years to come.



Great British Beer Festival

Why: Because beer deserves celebration
Where: Earl's Court, London **When:** 3-7 August

APOLOGIES TO OUR readers under 18, as you can't sample this. Still, it's the biggest beer festival in Britain where you'll be able to sample hundreds of different kinds of beer, cider, ale, lager... oh, sorry. Lost our train of thought there. One of the most delicious events of the summer, no doubt.

Flash Gordon

Studio: EMI Distribution **Director:** Mike Hodges
Release Date: Out now

20 YEARS BEFORE comic-book films became cool we had this – still one of the best examples of a kitsch, camp and over-the-top comic experience. Great visual character, a wonderful soundtrack by Queen and the greatest Brian Blessed quotes of all time make this an ideal HD purchase. All together now: "GORDON'S ALIVE?!"



E3 Release Dates

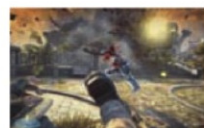
For a full rundown of the release dates of every PlayStation game visit www.nowgamer.com/release-dates



Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood

16 November 2010

Publisher: Ubisoft **Developer:** Ubisoft Montreal
We'd expect this in Europe on the following Friday, 19 November, or maybe the one before, 12 November.



Bulletstorm

22 February 2011

Publisher: EA **Developer:** People Can Fly, Epic Games
This massively over-the-top score attack shooter will more likely hit European shelves on 1 March.



DC Universe Online

November 2010

Publisher: Sony **Developer:** Sony Online Entertainment
November this year is the month to wrap yourself in spandex and put your pants on outside your trousers.



Dead Space 2

25 January 2011

Publisher: EA **Developer:** Visceral Games
Prepare to be scared absolutely witless by space beasts again right at the end of January next year.



EA Sports MMA

19 October 2010

Publisher: EA **Developer:** EA Tiburon
Although Europeans probably won't get kneed, kicked, elbowed and punched in the face until 22 October.



Fallout: New Vegas

22 October 2010

Publisher: Bethesda **Developer:** Obsidian Entertainment
Fallout heads out of the wasteland and into the desert. What happens in Vegas happens on 22 October.

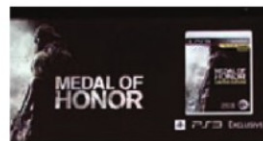


Gran Turismo 5

2 November 2010

Publisher: Sony **Developer:** Polyphony Digital
This is the release date for the US, but we'd expect a European release at around the same time.

PLAYSTATION SPECIAL EDITIONS



Medal Of Honor Limited Edition

The Limited Edition version of *Medal Of Honor* is being released exclusively on the PlayStation 3 and will feature a new high-definition version of the classic *Medal Of Honor: Frontline* game.



Dead Space 2 Limited Edition

Also exclusive to the PS3 is the *Dead Space 2 Limited Edition*, the added bonus of which is an HD, Move-enabled version of *Dead Space: Extraction*, which originally appeared on the Wii.



Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood Limited Edition Codex Edition

An extra £20 will get you a chest, a codex, a map, some cards, an *Assassin's Creed Lineage* DVD and the soundtrack, plus in-game bonuses and a surprise.



Gran Turismo 5 Collector's Edition

At the time of going to press *Gran Turismo 5 Collector's Edition* has only been confirmed for the US. It includes a toy car and a 300-page book, plus a code to unlock five in-game vehicles.



Star Wars: The Force Unleashed Collector's Edition

Features a Steelbook box and a MIMOBOT USB drive that's pre-loaded with a digital art book, the game's script and some wallpapers. Plus there's also extra in-game content.



Fallout: New Vegas Collector's Edition

Contains seven 'Lucky 7' poker chips and one 'Lucky 38' Platinum chip, a deck of cards, a graphic novel and also a 'making of...' DVD. However, it's currently only set for a US release.

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Every game
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AND FINALLY...

Where hype and hyperbole are welcome

IN BREASTS WE TRUST

'Actress' linked to role as Lara Croft

THEY SAY: US reality TV star, socialite and model Kim Kardashian is in talks to play Lara Croft in a reboot of the ailing *Tomb Raider* film licence. Hollywood sources report that Warner Bros. is looking for a more 'comic book' feel to a new Lara Croft film having already revealed that it wanted to reboot the franchise earlier this year. Megan Fox had been tipped to take over

from Angelina Jolie, but now Kardashian (who's only acting credit is for an episode of *CSI: New York*) seems to be in contention.

WE SAY: Kim Kardashian? Really? If you want to know why videogame movies always suck it's moves like this to put a 'face' into a movie rather than thinking about who would be best to play the character. Despite some poor acting Angelina Jolie at least made some sense as Croft. Kardashian, who is apparently taking acting lessons, certainly looks like she stepped out of a comic and with the new film aimed at teenagers we can almost understand why Warner is considering her, but since she only has one thing in common with Lara (technically two things) we say they should keep looking.

**LOOK!
CLEAVAGE**

EA PREDICTS WORLD CUP WINNER

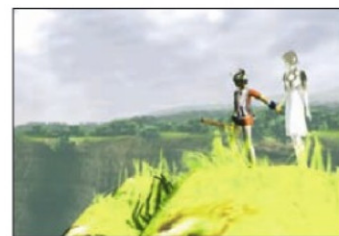
Best team in World Cup game to beat all

THEY SAY: Spain will win the FIFA World Cup in South Africa. So says EA Sports having run a meticulous study of the World Cup squads and run a simulated tournament using its World Cup videogame. Spain was predicted to beat Brazil with a comfortable 3-1 victory while England were knocked out at the semi-final stage on penalties, picking up the third place play-off against Argentina. EA claims to have tested each team against the exact conditions they will face in South Africa including high-altitude games that affect stamina. Now, of course, we can see just how close or far EA was away from the truth.

WE SAY: So Spain, who are the best rated team on EA's game, won the tournament. Sounds like a self-fulfilling prophecy to us. Not that it was impossible or anything, just a bit predictable. Having said that, the details of the match are telling. Brazil took the lead but conceded an unfortunate equaliser as a goalkeeping error let David Villa in to score. Anyone who's played *World Cup 2010* will be familiar with those words we would imagine.



**stop
please** X



Some Surprises

THEY SAY: Radiohead guitarist Jonny Greenwood has posted a top ten list of the band's favourite games, which includes *Ico*, *Red Dead Redemption*, *Half-Life* and *Braid*. There has been much rejoicing.

WE SAY: So Radiohead like games. Surely it's more interesting that they clearly love PlayStation with no Xbox games on their list.



Laying Some Smackdown

THEY SAY: Videogames have found an unlikely defender of their growing status as an art form from TNA wrestler Samoa Joe. He cited *Red Dead Redemption* and *Uncharted 2* as evidence of games as art.

WE SAY: Legendary film critic Roger Ebert versus the 280lb Samoa Joe. We know who we'd want on our side.



Games Are Bad M'kay

THEY SAY: "Spending two hours on a game station is equivalent to taking a line of cocaine in the high it produces," according to Blackpool-based therapist and counsellor Steve Pope speaking to the *Lancashire Evening Post*.

WE SAY: No evidence for this was provided and frankly comparing games with class-A drugs seems irresponsible to us.

Keep Up With Play



Never fall behind with Imagine eShop

Fallen behind with your **Play** purchases? Been out of the country for a while and found yourself in some mad, inhospitable place that doesn't stock the world's greatest PlayStation magazine? Fear not. You need never miss an issue of **Play** or find your collection full of holes thanks to the Imagine eShop. There you can buy the latest issue of the magazine direct, subscribe to **Play** and even pick up those elusive back issues that you may have missed. We know how important it is that you get every last scrap of **Play** brilliance in your brains. The eShop is a veritable Aladdin's cave of **Play** goodness and you can access it all at www.imagineshop.co.uk.

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the latest games, reveal upcoming titles we've had the chance to see first hand and wax lyrical about great PlayStation gaming moments. Our monthly podcast show is always packed full of opinion, facts, news and usually someone having to leave to have a little bit of a cry. We pull no punches on the **Play** Podcast. You can download individual episodes from www.Play-Mag.co.uk.

Go to www.Play-Mag.co.uk for daily updates and features

Reload

The very best of the Play Blog this month

E3 Flashback 2005 – The Games That Didn't Make It



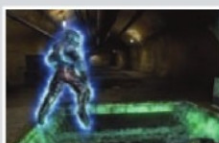
missions. Unsurprisingly, we've heard nothing since.

> **EYEDENTITY (SONY)** An EyeToy game that promised the ability to give voice commands to a pair of special agents in order to complete



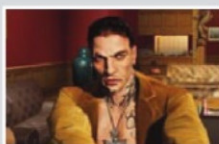
of war. Again, we've heard nothing since.

> **NI-OH (KOEI)** This was inspired by an Akira Kurosawa script about a 16th Century samurai warrior attempting to find his destiny in the midst



to understand it then and we still don't understand it.

> **FIFTH PHANTOM SAGA (SEGA)** A wonderfully strange FPS in which you could summon a phantom to support you. No one seemed



led some to believe it's on its way back.

> **KILLING DAY (UBISOFT)** This flashy FPS got a lot of attention, but was cancelled for unknown reasons. A 2009 trademark for the name has



would be all that successful anyway.

> **UNTITLED OLD WEST GAME (ROCKSTAR)** No idea what this is. Rockstar has been busy with *GTA IV* so maybe this is on the

<http://bit.ly/b3p2CH>

The FFXVII remake isn't happening (probably) – get over it (maybe)

THERE HAS BEEN much talk of a *Final Fantasy VII* remake as far back as the PS2. People want what they think they want, and so they ask constantly for a new-old *VII*.

But why don't people listen to what they're being told and abandon all hope and just get on with their lives. A remake of *FFVII* just isn't going to happen*.

On 19 February this year Yoshinori Kitase said that he, Square Enix and whoever else would be involved, would only consider a *FFVII* remake if it would take them a year to create. He also said it would take "three or four times longer" to make than *FFXIII*, meaning it would take about 12 years to develop.

Then, we heard that Kitase's original claim wasn't even accurate – at least not according to him – as he's gone and said it would actually take ten times as long to redo *Final Fantasy VII*. So we're talking 30-40 years.

We're not saying we believe what Kitase is saying. But that doesn't change the fact that he clearly doesn't want to do a remake – we know that kind of excuse: "Ian, can you make me a cup of tea?" "I could, but it would take one hundred million years." It's the oldest trick in the book.

*Or is it? OR IS IT? and so on.



<http://bit.ly/d7xldx>

12 Of The Best ModNation Mods



SILVESTRE (LOONEY TUNES) by sandrapitufina



SHADOW THE HEDGEHOG by Crazy-Face-Jay



BIG BOSS by DW86x



OPTIMUS PRIME by Youlikeyams



SEPHIROTH by Korboz



SKELETOR by Ryouko87



MORRIGAN CAPCOM2 by evrythng ivkwn



BAYONETTA by Micklebig



JASON CHP. 8 (BLOOD) by Vnathanel



INSPECTOR GADGET! by Berchi



SLY COOPER by Kdawgz0rz



BOBA FETT by Gilmore Girlz

<http://bit.ly/9HCsp3>

STAT ATTACK
5 million
copies of Red Dead
Redemption sold
in less than a
month

5 Ways 3D Could Revolutionise Killzone 3

1 PRESENTATION

Killzone 2's menus and HUD were all very functional and finely tuned. With the addition of 3D the HUD can be jazzed up a bit, given some flashier functions and generally show-off the technical superiority of the ISA over the Helghast. With 3D you could really make all those menus pop.

2 BOSSES

We found these to be a little repetitive and predictable, but the addition of 3D and how this could be best utilised should mean a little more imagination. Sniper battles across large open plains (like in *Metal Gear Solid* perhaps) or fights against giant mechs would be given greater impact thanks to some 3D work.

3 ENVIRONMENTS

Not much variety here in *Killzone 2* either if we're being brutally honest. Again, it was all functional and worked well, but we would have liked to have seen more. *Killzone 3* already seems to be

getting plenty with an arctic-type level being shown, but with 3D you could be doing a lot more. Greater definition in your depth of field would make things like jungle or forest levels unbelievably good looking.

4 WEAPONS

These were a bit limited in *Killzone 2*. Things have to get bigger and better in *Killzone 3* and that means some new ISA weapons. With 3D driving things we'd expect fancy weapons with bespoke HUDs and some long-distance weapons that show off the 3D at a distance, zooming into the target.

5 DESTRUCTION

We enjoyed a little by way of destructible environments in the last game. With 3D, having the world around you really fall to pieces would have even more of an impact than ever before. Watching a street collapse in front of you in full 3D and seeing the debris fly in front of your face would look incredible. Make it happen Guerrilla. We beg you.

<http://bit.ly/bt28ua>

Six characters who would be better with Brian Blessed's beard

> **KRATOS, GOD OF WAR:** He has a chinny-beard, but a Blessed-beard would make him more awesome.



> **LARA CROFT, TOMB RAIDER:** Possibly the greatest combination ever – a Blessed-beard and cleavage.



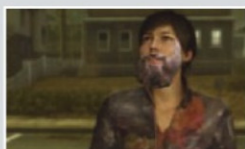
> **CAR, GRAN TURISMO:** Sports cars are the epitome of cool. After doing a bit of research, though, it's clear that cars could be made a hell of a lot cooler with one simple addition: the Blessed-beard.



> **NATHAN DRAKE, UNCHARTED:** Nate rocks the stubble look well enough, but he needs a BEARFACE.



> **MADISON PAIGE, HEAVY RAIN:** The hunt for the Origami Killer would be much easier with badass face-fuzz.



> **AFC WIMBLEDON, FOOTBALL MANAGER:** They'll always be more popular than the MK Dons, so AFC may as well become the coolest football club ever. One beard later and they're almost there.



<http://bit.ly/gw3lmi>

My favourite corner ever... Gran Turismo



I love straights in racing games but it's corners that really test your mettle as a driver and, being a bit of a racing game obsessive, I do have a favourite corner. It's the second turn of the Grand Valley Speedway course from the *Gran Turismo* series. It will teach you your first lesson about weight shifting and momentum.

Fact is, you can't get around that hairpin unless you understand how to shift the weight of the car to the left before you brake hard and steer right. It's a difficult skill, but once learned will serve you well in any racing sim you ever play. So that's why I love that corner – it taught me how to play driving simulators.

<http://bit.ly/gzrhk8>

Top 10 bras in games



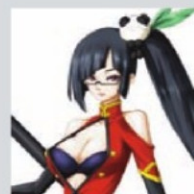
10 Silvia Christel – No More Heroes

What we like about this bra is that it's just peeking out as if it's not supposed to be showing, although it blatantly is. What a tease.



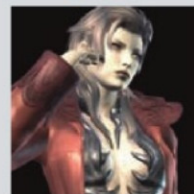
9 Ayumi – X-Blades

Sometimes we like subtlety, sometimes we don't. Ayumi's outfit is not subtle at all, although the bra is downright modest compared to the matching thong.



8 Litchi Faye-Ling – BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger

If your jacket is incapable of containing your ample bosom, then you need to make sure you have a bra you can rely on, like this simple but sturdy number.



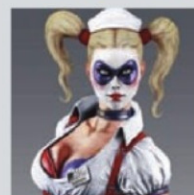
7 Elizabet – Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2

When Elizabet, demonic Ruler of Blood is dressing down in her human form, she still likes to exhibit some demonic flair with that epic bra. You go girl!



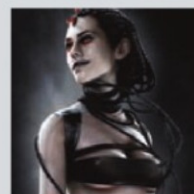
6 Vanessa Lewis – Virtua Fighter 4

Vanessa leaves her shirt open so that men look at her bra so that she then has an excuse to kick the living crap out of them. Nice lady.



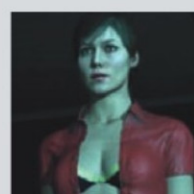
5 Harley Quinn – Batman: Arkham Asylum

It has to be said, Rocksteady took a few liberties when they designed their version of Harley Quinn's outfit. The bra really sets the whole ensemble off.



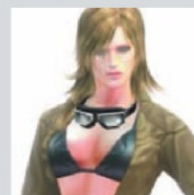
4 Maris Brood – Star Wars: The Force Unleashed

At first you think there's no way this bra could stay on properly, but then you remember Maris is a Jedi and probably uses the Force to support her chest.



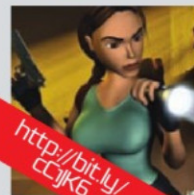
3 Madison Paige – Heavy Rain

Madison already has the best vest in games, and has fared well in our best bra list, too. Let's not forget she's a strong, intelligent, complex character though, eh?



2 EVA – Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater

Also known as Tatyana and Big Mama, and we can see why on both counts. Few bras can have been so gratuitously exposed as this one. Kojima is a genius.



1 Lara Croft – Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation

Unlike all our other bras, this one is always kept under wraps, but it tops this list because no bra in the history of games has ever worked harder.

<http://bit.ly/ccjK6>

PLAY³ Investigates

The inside scoop on everything PlayStation

Plus Points

It's been in the works for some time, but now a subscription-only version of the PlayStation Network is finally upon us – we look at Sony's plans for PlayStation Plus and give our verdict on its value for money...

IN NUMBERS
58
Countries PSN is available in

There are numerous things that make Sony Computer Entertainment a brilliant videogames company; great first-party software, slick, multi-functional hardware and forward-thinking innovation are just a few that spring to mind, but in the bipartisan world of console gaming one of the most contentious differences between the PlayStation brand and its main rival are their respective online gaming services. Microsoft has traditionally charged for access to the key features of Xbox Live, such as online gaming, while Sony has always taken a more generous approach to the PlayStation Network, enabling gamers to play online for free, as well as offering access to other features such as the BBC iPlayer, video delivery service and VidZone at no extra cost. There has been a trade-off, though, with Xbox gamers enjoying little extras such as cross-game chat with a premium Xbox Live Gold account – a feature that still eludes the PSN.

Rumours of a premium version of the PSN emerged at the end of last year, when a survey was sent to select gamers to gauge interest in potential features

for such a service. Amid the speculation Sony was quick to insist that any plans for a premium service wouldn't affect access to the PSN features that gamers already enjoyed for free. Sony recently finalised its plans for a subscription-only PSN service, before unveiling them at E3 – as promised the PSN that we know and love will remain untouched, but is the new service – PlayStation Plus – a compelling enough prospect to part with your cash?

Sony is keen to promote the added benefits of a PlayStation Plus

membership. The key function of the service is to provide access to a wealth of content all for the price of entry – which starts at £11.99 for three months, and moves to £39.99 for 12 months, comparable rates to that of Xbox Live. Sony promises that PlayStation Plus members will get approximately £200 worth of content in a year, which, while we're sure is accurate, isn't necessarily all it's cracked up to be. Said content will range from full PS3 and PSN titles to PSone classics, minis and exclusive themes/avatars. Members will also get

offered discounts on particular games, as well as early access to new beta trials, game demos and video – before they're made publicly available. Those that signed up within the first few days of launch in the UK also received a digital copy of *LittleBigPlanet*.

Videogame Country-club

The problem is that the content is going to be designated, and access to it will be limited by the duration of your membership. Unlike buying games on the PlayStation Store, members won't be able to access their 'free games' should they give up their Plus subscription. Granted, £40 a year may sound reasonable, and if you play a lot of games, including minis, it could save you money. But what if you've played all the games on offer in a particular month? Much like the weekly discounts on the PlayStation Store tend to affect older, less popular titles, we can see Sony pushing the content it wants to push on members, rather than giving away anything of real value. And why would it? Until we know what sort of titles are on offer, the judgement on content has to remain reserved. Meanwhile, the full-game trials

IN NUMBERS
50
million
Number of registered PSN accounts



IN NUMBERS
200
Approximate value
in GBP of yearly free
PlayStation Plus
content

IN NUMBERS
70,000
Pieces of content
on PSN



sound rather innovative but amount to little more than glorified demos – you can do what you want with your full-game trials, whether that be playing online, or trying any of the different game modes, but the kicker is an hour time limit. Also, members will only be able to trial two full games a month, with the option to purchase trialed games.

We're far more positive about the other things PlayStation Plus offers. Early access to demos and beta trials sounds perfect for those who like to be on the cutting edge of new games, while the ability to automate downloads of content and updates sounds nifty – we're just not sure it's worth £40 every 12 months. A rumour emerged during the unveiling of PlayStation Plus that the elusive cross-game chat would finally feature as part of the service, but Sony refuted the suggestion, with SCEE chief Andrew House distancing the feature from the service. It could be that cross-game chat is destined for PS3 sometime in the near future, but despite being the console's most called for online feature its value to gamers could well be determined by PlayStation



PlayStation Plus was officially unveiled at Sony's E3 event.

Plus. Is Sony waiting to see how the service does before adding the feature? Would gamers want cross-game chat if they had to pay for it? It remains to be seen whether PlayStation Plus will take off, but the key to success could come from future features. If the survey from last year is to be believed, they could

include catch-up TV, an online music service, Facebook access, online game saves and much more – the sheer potential alone makes PlayStation Plus worth keeping an eye on.

IN NUMBERS
2006
Year of PSN
launch

IN NUMBERS
960
Number of PS3
games with online
features

PlayStation Plus: All the Facts

Everything you need to know about Sony's premium service at a glance

LAUNCHED: 29 June

REQUIREMENTS: PS3 Firmware 3.40

PRICE: £11.99 for 90 days/£39.99 for a year

FEATURES:

- Full-game trials for a designated period
- Access to designated free games for duration of membership
- Exclusive content for members, such as avatars and themes
- Designated discounts on PS3/PSP games
- Early access to designated demos, beta trials and video content
- Automatic download for content and updates



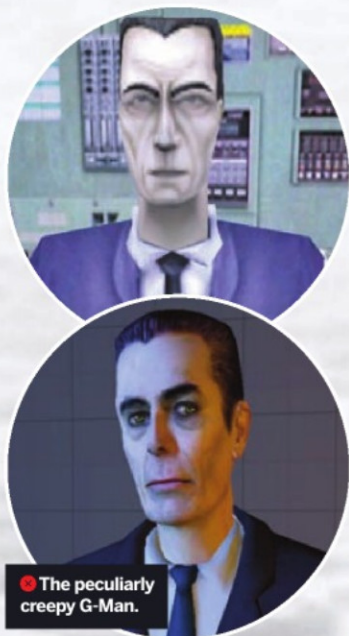
PLAYBOY'S GORDON FREEMAN

The man; the myth; the scientist. It would be easy to say how much we love the Half-Life series, but the fact is we love The One Free Man *that bit more*



Physics!

While the first game was one of the first to put things like weapons and health in realistic places – not just spinning icons in the middle of a room – it was the second game where people actually went 'wow'. Freeman's handling of the gravity gun still ranks as some of the best gaming we've ever played, with intelligently designed physics-based puzzles a-go-go. Seeing as we haven't heard anything about *Episode Three* yet – and certain signs point to it involving *Portal's* Aperture Science – we're more than happy to speculate that some even more mad physics will be involved for Gordon to mess about with.



• The peculiarly creepy G-Man.

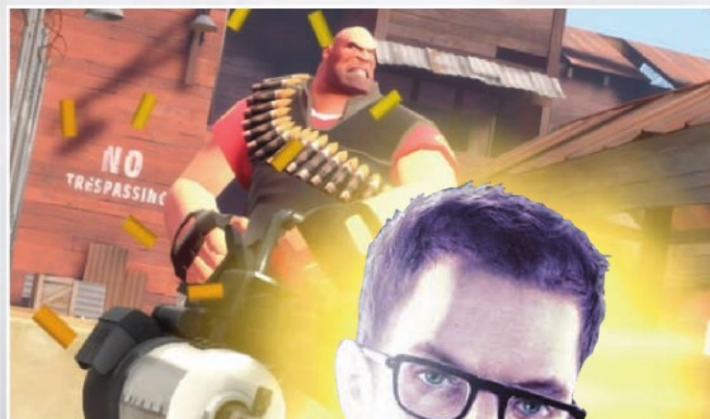
Bucking The Trend

Gordon's appeared on PS3 even though Valve seem to hate the console, which is achievement enough for us. Still, with CEO Gabe Newell stating he wants to see the PS3 "open like a Mac", not "closed like a GameCube" it's still up in the air whether or not we will indeed end up with a PS3 release for *Half-Life: Episode Three*. The long-awaited third part of the *Episodes* trilogy hasn't been heard from at all in years, though, so for now at least we can treat this silence as golden. They haven't told us Gordon *isn't* coming back to PS3...



Good Game, Good Games

So far we've been able to enjoy all of Gordon Freeman's adventures on the PS2 and PS3. This would be merely 'alright' were it not for the fact that all of his adventures have amounted to some of the most consistently high-quality, revolutionary experiences in first-person shooters. As it is, it's a smidge higher on the scale than 'alright'. The original *Half-Life* is still a fine experience, but the collection of games in *The Orange Box* – including *Team Fortress 2* and *Portal* – is quite possibly the finest gathering of games ever collected up and offered on one disc. And it's all thanks to Gordon. In a way.



Familiarity

Everybody knows someone who looks like Gordon Freeman. He's a famous videogame protagonist who is infinitely easier to look like than someone like Solid Snake or Soap MacTavish (well, easier for geeks at least). As a result he feels like a more believable character and, because of this, he is infinitely easier for players to relate to. Even if he does have a PhD in theoretical physics, which is something that would make our brains melt if we even tried to think... about... *zzt*
head explodes.

Alyx Vance

Bear with us here – if Gordon Freeman didn't exist, *Half-Life* wouldn't exist. This would mean the second game would never have been made and, therefore, one of gaming's greatest characters would never have seen the light of day. When we last saw her she wasn't in the best of states, as her father had just been killed. It will be interesting to see what Valve does for her character in *Episode Three* – will she retain her humanity even as she goes on a killing spree? Will she give up? Will she take Dog to be rehomed? We need to know, and we need to know on PS3, please.



What's next for Alyx Vance? We're desperate to find out.

WE WILL CONCEDE this probably should be 'Play Loves *Half-Life*', but we wanted to make a more personal angle on this. It's the beard, mainly. Without that, we wouldn't care, but with it we have the protagonist of one of the best series of all time (backed up by some other fantastic games), a near-perfect supporting cast and a big bag of physics. We love you, Gordon.

THE PLAY


TRIALS

DON'T FIGHT THE LAW

THE LAW WILL WIN

CRIMES ARE COMMITTED all over the world with frightening regularity, but it's those that don't get caught we should be most afraid of. With the well-being of the world in mind, **Play** decided to round up the main offenders of gaming's worst offences and put them on trial. But don't worry, this isn't a kangaroo court

CRIME: Unnecessary Implementation of Quick Time Events

PROSECUTION: M'lud, the games we have hauled in today on this charge are guilty of the most heinous of crimes – *God Of War*, *Mini Ninjas*, *ShellShock 2*, *Jak And Daxter* – stand up straight! And as for you, *Assassin's Creed II*, with your 'press  to have sex' nonsense... You see, instead of offering the player a more in-depth, involved and rewarding experience, these titles have opted to wrest control away from the user. This, in effect, creates an interactive cut-scene, destroying immersion and offering developers an easy way to make things look 'cool' without having to design complex game mechanics.

SENTENCE: The accused will be forced to live the rest of their lives according to the rules of a QTE. If they fail, they have to repeat, ad infinitum, until they succeed.

GUILTY

DEFENCE: Your honour, this isn't an issue that should be wasting this court's time – everyone knows that a QTE, when done well, can add a great deal to a game. See *Bayonetta* or *Resident Evil 5* for prime examples of how an experience is enhanced by these scenes, and not harmed as my good chum over there assumes. Yes, the likes of *ShellShock 2* do them badly, but that game is reprehensible anyway. As for *Assassin's Creed II*, it's not like you actually *have* to take part in them, is it? To say they ruin things is a step too far.





YOUR SAY

"Bad stories – you have been p*ssed off by this person, therefore kill everything in plain sight for revenge, eg *Prototype*. Save points – when it auto saves at awkward points, making you replay annoyingly hard boss battles and stuff" – *UberCool_UberGoff*

"Exploding barrels, and enemies conveniently taking cover behind them. Since when have highly flammable barrels ever been useful? Unskippable cut-scenes, especially straight after a checkpoint. Every time you die, you have to watch the same thing over and over and over. *Uncharted 2* had one of them, but that's the only issue there" – *the bossman*

"For me if a game has a bad storyline (ie *Modern Warfare 2*) it doesn't really help me want to play the game, most other flaws games have can be overlooked somewhat if a game has a good story" – *rbl007*

"My one would have to be if you die in a game, the game tries to give you hints on why you died but all it does is state the bleeding obvious: *Modern Warfare 2!*" – *skrudge7*

Join the Play Nation by signing up to our forum at www.play-mag.co.uk/forum



CRIME: The Visual Slander of Women

PROSECUTION: M'lud, this crime not only affects the poor ladies in games such as *Dragon Age* and *Final Fantasy* – no, it brings about painful embarrassment for those playing the game who are not astonishingly immature when it comes to how they see women. *Ninja Gaiden*, *Batman's Harley Quinn* and the ridiculous *Soul Calibur IV* all cause huge damage to the reputation of both gamer and developer. The former is seen as a pervert, the latter as a geek who has never seen a real woman. It's a harmful crime indeed.

DEFENCE: Your lovely honour, the prosecution seems to think that all games showing women as nothing more than a pair of breasts are being totally serious. He seems to think that fantasy titles offering the ladies in them a small leather thong to protect them from broadswords is done in order to stick two fingers up at the feminists. He is failing to see the influence of more tongue-in-cheek efforts like *Bayonetta*. To say all depictions of women are like this is patently wrong and is the opinion held only by the ignorant.

SENTENCE: Guilty parties will be forced to travel the world via budget airlines to personally apologise to every woman in the world.

GUILTY!

CRIME: Aggravated Nolan Northism

PROSECUTION: M'lud, there comes a time when the cult of personality takes a step too far – it's not even a good thing in the first place, but when we become absolutely saturated with the voiceover work of one man then we know something is wrong. From *Uncharted* through *Assassin's Creed*, *Dark Void*, *White Knight Chronicles*, *Prince Of Persia* and *Army Of Two: The 40th Day* we have the influence of Mr North. Of course, we believe the man to be talented, but his constant appearances are ruining our enjoyment of games, destroying immersion and annoying us. A lot.

SENTENCE: All developers releasing games using Nolan North as a voice actor will have "I HAVE NO IMAGINATION" tattooed on their foreheads. Unless it's *Uncharted*.

GUILTY!

CRIME: Contempt for a Player's Time

PROSECUTION: M'lud, this offence brings a tear to my eye... I need to compose myself. When a developer decides that – instead of a standard, simple menu screen – they will use a hub area for the player to choose what to do next, well... what's the point? It invariably ends up being a waste of time and a massive inconvenience when all you want to do is get on with playing the game. *Wolfenstein*, *Fairytale Fights*, *Burnout Paradise* and *MX Vs ATV Reflex* are all card-carriers for this particular cause, and I see no reason why they should remain unpunished for it.

DEFENCE: Your beloved honour, once again my jackass of a friend over here seems to be missing a trick. He is ignoring the positive influence of something like *Ghostbusters*, which offered players a wonderful nostalgic trip through the fire station. He also seems to be blissfully unaware that *Burnout Paradise* was a good example of a 'hub' menu, and not – as he seems to think – a 'bad' one. Of course, you couldn't simply go to a menu and choose a race, but the whole city was open from the very beginning for you to muck about in. It's a great feature.

SENTENCE: Developers using this method will be forced to sit in a waiting room for a minimum of 30 minutes every time they want to leave one room in order to get to another.

GUILTY!



DEFENCE: Your amazing honour, to say a voice actor as talented as Mr North is unwanted is like saying we don't want the cream on the hot chocolate. It is not a crime for a man to make a living, it is not a crime that the man is good at what he does and it is certainly not a crime for the world of gaming to create its first demi-celebrity solely through voiceover work. We will admit that Mr North should probably calm it down a bit, but he should not be found guilty for any of this.



THEIR SAY

"The absolute number one gaming crime is lack of imagination. If you're in the gaming industry a creative mind is imperative" – Samuel Ranta-Eskola, producer Starbreeze

Samuel had a lot more to say on the matter, so point your browser to www.play-mag.co.uk for his full list of crimes.

"The combination of unskippable cut-scenes and badly placed checkpoints has ruined many games for me. I don't mind watching most cut-scenes once but if you then go and kill me and force me to watch it again... and again... and again... well that's when I stop playing for good" – Paul Woodbridge, design director Relentless

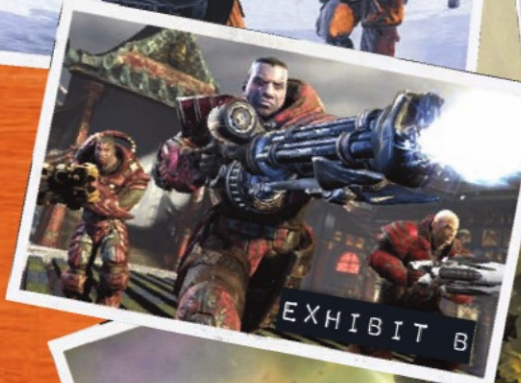
"Games that have a huge difficulty spike just before the end. The player will get through 12-15 hours of a game having great fun and then spend the final hour tearing their hair out with seemingly immortal final bosses, cheap deaths and incomprehensible puzzles" – Sandy Lockie, designer Bizarre Creations

"I remember some epic battles with a strong narrative and huge everything, all hell breaking loose, suddenly cut with a cheap 2D text box explaining 'Mini game controls'. How about that to bring you crashing back to reality? It's often a very functional solution but we're in a day and age where this can really be avoided" – Nicolas Doucet, producer Sony Computer Entertainment Europe

CRIME: Repeating Oneself With Malicious Intent

PROSECUTION: M'lud, nothing can be more grating than chatting to an NPC in a videogame only to have them either repeat themselves ad infinitum or completely change their tone, pitch and speaking patterns in the space of one sentence. Offenders weigh in with the likes of *Dragon Age*, *Oblivion*, *Final Fantasy*, *Demon's Souls* and even *The Darkness*. All of these titles subject players to inconsistencies that ruin immersion, drag a player out of the atmosphere created for them and generally annoy a great deal. Very few indeed avoid these trappings, so I say we lock them all up. Forever.

DEFENCE: Your darling honour, I can offer no straightforward defence for the behaviour of these moronic in-game characters. All I can do is plead to both your ability to accept this is just a game, made by humans just like you and me, and to your sense of humour. For example, who doesn't laugh when someone in *Final Fantasy* says "... constantly for five boxes of text? If we lambast gaming for these small failings then we have lost our joy, and probably shouldn't be playing them any more. It can be jarring, but I suggest to this court you just ignore it and get over it.



CRIME: Dereliction of Creative Duty

PROSECUTION: M'lud, we adore the games industry for its creative ways, how it can transport us to new universes, tell us stories that make us laugh and show us some of the finest artwork this side of the Guggenheim. So why are we snowed under with games set in generic military campaigns? Why are we surrounded by bald space marines? Why do the likes of *Killzone*, *Modern Warfare*, *Resistance*, *Unreal*, *Turok* and *IL2-Sturmovik* insist on living in such boring, uninspired worlds? Games are limited by the imagination of their creators, and the imagination of their creators shouldn't be as limited as they currently are.

DEFENCE: Your sweet honour, I... we... they... hmm. The thing is... what I mean to say... well, you see... ah. Surely setting things in a real-world conflict isn't a lack of imagination? Of course, there were those who cried for the constant World War II games to be imprisoned under a similar law to this, and there's no excuse for endless bald space marines. But surely some slack can be cut for those titles set in the real world of war? Except for *ShellShock 2* and *World At War*, obviously. Other than that, I have no defence for this.

SENTENCE: The accused will be forced to enter real theatres of combat in order to show them that making games about kittens and sweets probably isn't that bad a thing.

CRIME: ACRONYM (Annoyingly Cryptic Rendition Of A Name You Made)

PROSECUTION: M'lud, this particular crime has been a bane on not just gaming, but the world as a whole for many years, and it doesn't just cover the ridiculous acronyms that the marketing parasites come up with. No, this includes ridiculous combi-names and stupid genre titles, too. *First Encounter Assault Recon*? No. *Pro Evolution Soccer*? What does that even mean? Shmup? It sounds like you've had an accident in your pants halfway through saying something. We won't even get into how stupid the term 'sandbox' is for a genre, or the confusion it leads to. And as for *Invizimals*... well, m'lud, I rest my case.

DEFENCE: Your sexy, beautiful honour, to attack the term shmup is to attack gaming itself and for this I will not stand. There is a rich heritage of made-up words, genres and ridiculous acronyms that make this industry what it is today and the continuing evolution and creation of new terms just shows that things are continuing to move on just as they should. While we will accept there are some bad eggs in the crowd – we try to distance ourselves from H.A.W.X., for example – it is showing contempt for our beloved world of games to claim these so-called 'issues' are a bane.

GUILTY



NOT GUILTY



OUR SAY

"Subtitles ON by default. Seems to be the case on ALL Japanese games, but now increasingly Western ones, too. Start game, intro starts with subtitles, turn console off, restart, option, subtitles off, start game" – Dan Howdle, games editor, **NowGamer**

"Unskippable cut-scenes. You're on the fourth attempt at a boss, and you're forced to watch the same, tiresome cut-scene for the fourth time. No. Bad developers. Unskippable cut-scenes have to go" – Chris McMahon, news editor, **games™**

"When you watch a cut-scene that's clearly in-game engine, but the minigun your character was last holding suddenly changes to a pistol, or is gone altogether. Same when there's a car/object/bodies that I've just put there. And then they're not. *Uncharted 2*, I'm looking at you" – Tom Hopkins, news editor, **NowGamer**

"Blatant boss spoilers. Those massive stashes of health and ammo just before you go through the door you've spent ages finding the key for. Is there going to be a hackneyed boss battle on the other side? You bet your sweet ass there is" – Russell Barnes, **NowGamer** contributor

"Big end bosses where they're not necessary. The Joker in *Arkham Asylum*. There are others" – Samuel Roberts, features editor, **SciFiNow**

For more gaming crimes as witnessed by ourselves and others in the industry, check out www.play-mag.co.uk.

CRIME: Gross Misjudgement of What is 'Cool', 'Mature' or 'Gritty'

PROSECUTION: M'lud, the examples of games mature enough to be called mature are rare. Flip the coin, however, and you have countless examples of idiocy, ranging from misjudged – *Assassin's Creed II* – to downright offensive – *Rogue Warrior*. As for games that market themselves as gritty? These games are invariably criminals of the highest order. The defence of 'comedy', as seen in *50 Cent: Blood On The Sand*, does not stand up to scrutiny, and as such this charge is an open and shut case.

DEFENCE: Don't fight it your honour, you know you love me, too... ahem. The games industry has grown along with its main audience and they need to be playing games appropriate to their age. As a result, games like *Army Of Two: The 40th Day* should be commended, not mocked. While not the most effective of ways to approach mature gaming, at least they tried. Of course, the fact that the game completely misses the point – as with titles such as *Rogue Warrior*, *Dragon Age* and *Assassin's Creed II* – should just be stricken from the record.

SENTENCE: Guilty parties will be forced to play *Rogue Warrior* to completion once a day, every day, until they either die or grow up.

GUilty!

CRIME: Breach of the Superhuman Cloning Act 2001

PROSECUTION: M'lud, the tendency for developers to put in games difficulty spikes of this type is worrying, especially when we look at the examples that paint themselves as at least slightly realistic. *Uncharted 2* is a prime example, relying on standard 'one headshot kill' soldiers until later in the game, when half-invincible minigun-toting troops are wheeled out. This is before we mention the never-ending stream of enemies like in *Medal Of Honor: Airborne*, or the simple, futile nonsense of *Rogue Warrior*. Inconsistency in the representation of the human form should not be encouraged, and should in fact be eradicated.

DEFENCE: Your honour, you look especially radiant today. Actually, I move to strike. Anyway, challenge increasing over the course of a game is something we should encourage, not criminalise. Of course the minigunners on *Uncharted 2* aren't realistic, but when examples such as *Borderlands*, *BioShock* and *Deus Ex* are taken into account you have to see that superpowered humans in a relatively realistic game, as well as the stream/wave system have their place. Not only that, but they can add a huge amount to the experience as evidenced with *Borderlands'* co-operative mode increasing the challenge with more players.

NOT GUILTY!

CRIME: Regicide Under Duress

PROSECUTION: M'lud: *BioShock*. I could be unprofessional and end my career on that case-winning high note, but I'll press on. Boss battles have their place, but not every game needs them – used incorrectly they hark back to an archaic time and are nothing more than a relic. Even the magnificent *Portal* was guilty of this most heinous of crimes, showing that the mighty can be drawn into this seedy underworld. I do not think we even need to explain why serial bosses, or 'boss rushes' are bad either. Lock them all up.

DEFENCE: Your honour, I have something to tell you... no, I must press on. What we have here is a clear case of prejudice. Me old mucker in the prosecution is obviously one of those types who isn't very good at games and so doesn't like the sudden step up in skill he is supposed to be capable of when battling a boss. Nor does he understand that – as well as being part of our heritage – good bosses are the most memorable characters in games. For reference, see: *Metal Gear Solid 3*, *Shadow Of The Colossus* and *Bayonetta*. I rest my case.

NOT GUILTY!

10 THINGS YOU CAN MAKE IN LITTLEBIGPLANET 2

(...and 5 things you can't)

VALVE CORPORATION

THE SCOPE OF *LittleBigPlanet 2*'s tools is so huge that it looks unlikely that the best creations are going to come from individuals. Media Molecule expects dev teams to start forming within the *LBP 2* community, with creators able then to focus on their own specialisation, be that art, programming, design, storytelling, music... some teams might even have managers and promoters. Who knows?

We're not talking anything on the scale of Valve, but there are few better examples of creative, independent developers that just seem to be able to do anything and everything.



THE GODFATHER TRILOGY

LITTLEBIGPLANET 2 ISN'T just a platform for games, it's a platform for a wide range of creative endeavours, including movies. You can now direct and record sequences and string them together into entire movies, or even epic movie trilogies. Some creators will inevitably re-create their favourite films as closely as they can, but Media Molecule is also hoping for some great original movie creations. Perhaps the *LBP* community will soon have its very own Francis Ford Coppola.

* The Godfather Trilogy is available on Blu-ray from Paramount Home Entertainment.



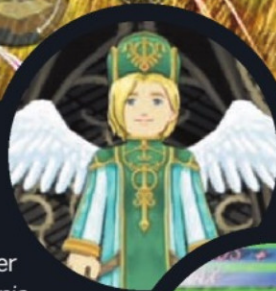
JUST CAUSE 2

THE JETPACK AND paint gun are now just two of an as-yet-unspecified (but definitely more than two) number of items Sackboy can be equipped with. The only one we've tried is the Grapple Claw, which works in a similar way to the grapple tools in *Bionic Commando*, *Lost Planet 2* and *Just Cause 2* and is loads of fun. In the level we played it was used to enhance the classic *LBP* platforming action but it could be used as the centrepiece of an entire game idea we're sure.



TALES OF SYMPHONIA

FROM STORY START to finish, the longest RPG ever made is *Tales Of Symphonia*, with most players taking around 80 hours to finish it. In *LBP 2* you too can make an 80-hour RPG. Levels can be linked together into whole games, and there's no limit to how many levels can be linked because they're all stored on the *LBP* servers. Of course, how long it would take to *make* a game that takes 80 hours to play is another matter, but the dedication of *LBP* creators should never be underestimated.



PARTY POLITICAL SACKCAST

WHEN MEDIA MOLECULE'S Kareem Ettouney first started seeing some deeply personal creations filtering out of the *LBP* community, he wondered what might be next. Social commentary? Political statements? There's nothing stopping someone creating a level with a serious message behind it. We don't think it's quite what Ettouney had in mind, but we do wonder if any politicians might get themselves into the *LBP* community in the same way that many now use Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. So then how do we know the viral *LBP* political levels haven't started already? How do we know we didn't subconsciously vote the way we did in the General Election because of Sackboy? Yikes!



MICHAEL JACKSON'S THRILLER

LITTLEBIGPLANET 2 has specific tools for creating music videos so you could, if it weren't for potential copyright issues, remake all 13 minutes and 33 seconds of the greatest music promo ever made. The scenes before and after the song would be no problem, and the undead dance routine is exactly the sort of thing the new tools are designed for. Just get a group of Sackbots, dress 'em up as zombies then program them to dance in perfect synchronisation. As for the song, there are going to be music-creation tools and you'll even be able to record your own voice samples. *LBP 2* could prove to be a better launch pad for fledgling pop careers than *The X-Factor*.

* The Making Of Michael Jackson's Thriller is available on VHS, DVD and even Laserdisc from Vestron Video, if you can find it anywhere.



10 THINGS YOU CAN MAKE IN LITTLEBIGPLANET 2



THINGS YOU CAN'T DO

...although some genius probably will

FIRST-PERSON

LBP 2 is more flexible than *LBP 1*, but it's still fundamentally 2D. The camera can be moved around, but its rotation is limited by the fact that if you turned it too far up or down or either side your shot would go off the edge of the level. The closest we saw to first-person was a third-person view, but it was pointed downwards so you could only see a little way in front of Sackboy.

MMO

No, 'World Of Sackcraft' is not looking like a realistic possibility at the moment, as all levels are still limited to a maximum of four players. When we thought really hard about it, we wondered whether the new social features might make some kind of *LittleBigPlanet* equivalent to a play-by-mail game possible, but even that would be a bit of a stretch.

PLAYSTATION 4

Someone made a calculator in the first *LBP* and no one seems to know how. A calculator is a basic computer so it stands to reason that someone will figure out how to make a more complex computer in *LittleBigPlanet 2*, with its in-depth chips and boards system. But there will be limits – no one's going to make a PS4. But a ZX Spectrum? Maybe.

BRING BACK THE DEAD

A lot of people are rightly excited about *LittleBigPlanet 2*, but we should remember that, while the possibilities are vast, it cannot perform miracles. So don't expect the second coming of Christ, or even the second coming of your nan. That said, we reckon Sackboy might have what it takes to turn water into wine, or maybe even to part a sea.

THE MATRIX

Yes, you can create original movies, and re-create any existing movie so long as you're aware of the risk of having it removed on copyright grounds... but wait, any movie? No, you couldn't accurately remake *The Matrix*. The 'bullet time' sequences would require the camera to move in a full circle and that's something *LBP 2* can't do. Although... we just thought of a way... maybe...

* The Complete Matrix Trilogy is available on Blu-ray from Warner Home Video.

LEMMINGS

WHEN MEDIA MOLECULE first introduced us to Sackbots – AI clones of Sackboy that can be customised and even programmed – it was mentioned that they could be used to create a game in the vein of *Lemmings*, and it's easy to see how. Seeing a group of Sackbots pacing back and forth between two unassailable obstacles is immediately reminiscent of the classic Psygnosis puzzler, and we can see how it would be possible to set up a means of selecting one to perform a task such as building a stairway, digging a tunnel or squeaking 'OH NO!' then exploding.

COREL PAINTER

ONE OF THE testing team at Media Molecule has already managed to make a set of his own creative tools using the *LittleBigPlanet 2* tools. Exactly what these custom-made tools do, we weren't told, but we can imagine how painting would be doable. Make a brush controlled by a Direct Control Seat and have it moved about with the analogue sticks, with different controller buttons emitting different colours of a material unaffected by gravity. All right, so it's not quite Corel Painter – which is a very realistic digital art application, by the way – but it's still amazing that even *LBP 2*'s extensive range of tools doesn't actually represent the limit.

YOUR LIFE STORY

ABOVE ALL ELSE, Media Molecule's art director, Kareem Ettouney, would like to see *LittleBigPlanet* getting personal. He cited the book/movie *Persepolis* as an example of the kind of meaningful storytelling he feels *LBP 2* is perfect for. It's a way to tell people about yourself and who you are and what you do in a more creative, entertaining way than a Twitter post or Facebook status update. It's something that emerged naturally from the first game – **Play** shared its journey to work and love of tea and cake through *LBP*, for example – and Media Molecule is taking deliberate steps to encourage more of it this time around.

CARNAGE HEART

"WHAT THE HELL is *Carnage Heart*?" you're probably wondering. It's an obscure PSone game developed by Japanese studio Artdink. It was one of the most demanding games ever but in light of what Media Molecule has revealed regarding the microchip and circuit board systems in *LBP 2*, *Carnage Heart* was perhaps also 13 years ahead of its time. What set it apart from other games was that you programmed the AI of your own mechanoid forces using the complex circuit board system (pictured left), then watched it battle other mechanoids according to your programming. Very similar to what's involved at the most hardcore end of *LBP 2*'s creativity spectrum, *Carnage Heart*'s problem was that it lacked the option to go make a dragon out of cardboard if all those microchips got too much.

5 HOT SUMMER GAMES

Play picks the ideal BBQ-friendly games on PS3

2 EVERYBODY'S GOLF: WORLD TOUR

Players: 1-4

We go on quite a bit about *Everybody's Golf*, but there's a good reason for this. It's good. Really good. What's more it has that special multiplayer-friendly attribute of needing virtually no prior knowledge to play it and enjoy it. Whether you get drawn in by the cute anime style or the addictive gameplay doesn't matter because this game will get you one way or another.



4 MODNATION RACERS

Players: 1-4

Split-screen is something that went away for far too long, assumed by some developers and publishers to be pointless once online gaming took off early in this generation. However, more and more games are supporting it again including Sony's *ModNation Racers*. Spend a little time making everyone a Mod and then head on the track for some karting carnage.



5 MEGA DRIVE ULTIMATE COLLECTION

Players: 1-2

Everybody knows the Mega Drive and everybody has at least one favourite game from that era that you can play in multiplayer. This retro collection has enough games therefore to please everyone. Even if you're not playing together, games like *Comix Zone* still have that 'X factor' that draws in a crowd. This really is the perfect social game.

3 FIFA 10

Players: 1-7

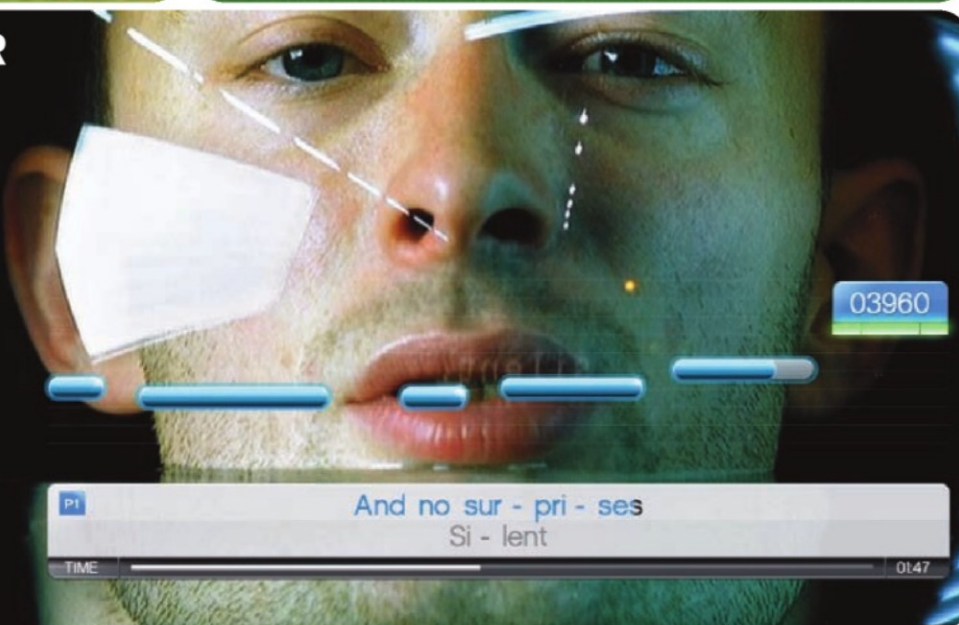
Unlike *SingStar* there can be a steep learning curve with *FIFA 10*, but as the best football game on the market and assuming you have plenty of footy-loving friends who've caught World Cup fever, this is essential at any gathering. Any gripes we might have about playing against the AI or even online don't mean anything when you can laugh in the face of your defeated friends right there with you.



1 SINGSTAR

Players: 1-8

You may have expected us to say *Guitar Hero* or *Rock Band*, but two of the great things about *SingStar* are that it has an entry level of zero and thanks to SingStore has a catalogue of music that will suit virtually every taste going. By comparison getting the most from *Rock Band* or *Guitar Hero* is trickier and its track listings much narrower. So we say, break out the *SingStar*.



TEAM PICKS

The Play team's best summer games



GAVIN

ROCK BAND

You could set up a stage and create a little festival. But then you'd have to force people to throw away their own booze on the way in and charge £4 a can for beer out of your fridge.



IAN

SINGSTAR QUEEN

I feel sick admitting it, but the game I associate most with summer is *SingStar Queen*. It's brilliant for all your mates who can't actually play games.



JON

JOE DANGER

As much as everyone loves old games, they like new stuff even more and when it has a retro flavour that's a winning combination. As such *Joe Danger* is a sure-fire winner.



KEITH

VIRTUA TENNIS 3

When the sun comes out it's time for tennis and while *VT* is great for a simple one-on-one it's the outlandish four-player mini-games where this really shines.

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RE:PLAY



First you're all like, games are too good, then you're all like, games are too crap, then back again, and again. You're so hot and cold. What about our needs?



This month's letters answered by:
Gavin Mackenzie,
Rum baba

I've come to the realisation that you lot are never happy, never satisfied and never right... I mean always right. Yes, *always* right about everything. That's why we need your letters. We'd be wrong about everything otherwise. But anyway, going back to the 'never satisfied' point. We seem to get more letters these days complaining that there are too many good games on the PlayStation 3 than letters complaining that there are too many crap ones, although we get a lot of both.

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Peggle-o-maniac

Hi, my name is Paul, and I'm a Peggleholic. Ever since seeing the reviews I suffered temptation and finally gave in and downloaded it. Since then my life has not been the same. Hours upon hours are now spent playing this wonderful little gem. All other games are now redundant. Any spare moments I have I crave the sound of the ball bouncing on a peg.

I thought I was getting this under control but then I downloaded *Peggle Nights* only to refresh my thirst for more. Help me **Play** magazine on my addiction as I have fallen in love with this simple, awesome game and see no end in sight...

Paul Jones, via email

Hi Paul, my name is Gavin and I am a Peggleholic also. But I've been clean now

for, ooh, maybe a week. They say that once you're a Peggleholic you're always a Peggleholic and that the only solution is... *no Peggle*. But I've managed to cut back on my Peggling, just doing it now and again. Y'know, socially, or if I've had a really bad day and I just need something to take the edge off. But if I wanted to stop completely, I could. I don't have a problem any more. It's my friends that have a problem... how can they understand... *Peggle* understands me, *Peggle* loves me unconditionally, *Peggle* is my one true friend and always will be. I'm only five levels away from the



Don't even look at it. It can control your mind.

'Doctor Of The Peggle Arts' Trophy. When I get that I'll stop. I promise.

If you or anyone you know has been affected by the issues discussed in this letter then read this article on the **Play** blog: www.play-mag.co.uk/opinion/peggle-on-ps3-%E2%80%9393-turn-back-now-while-you-still-can.

Just A Really Nice Letter

I noticed on the web today that Sony is finally turning a profit out of the PS3. Personally, I've only just bought one, mainly due to the massive number of PS3-exclusive games out now, but also because the Slim is now actually the same price as the nearest Xbox 360 equivalent (an Elite with a Wi-Fi adapter), so there's really no longer any reason not to buy a PS3, given the choice. I look forward to the PS3 taking its rightful place as the most popular console of this generation (unless you count the Wii, of course, but let's not go there).

Incidentally, congratulations on an excellent magazine and thanks for not succumbing to the temptation to splash 'Heavy Rain – Every Ending Revealed!' across the cover in April,

like every other PS3 mag (I mean, why would anyone want to read that?).

In answer to your 'What's the longest it has taken you to get around to playing a game after buying it?' question, I bought *Pit Fighter* for the ZX Spectrum in 1991 and still haven't got round to playing it. Do I win?

Steve Johnson, via email

Yes, you do win, mainly because you avoided playing *Pit Fighter* on the Spectrum, which was rubbish and pointless because the Spectrum couldn't do digitised graphics. You also win a free game thanks to the carefree, jovial, happy-go-lucky tone of your letter, which almost brought a smile to my face, but didn't because I was thinking about *Pit Fighter*. Never mind.

And no, we didn't do a big 'every ending' feature on *Heavy Rain*, mainly because that defeats the point of the game somewhat. If we were going to write something posthumous about *Heavy Rain*, it'd be about Madison's vest, which we did. See for yourself here: www.play-mag.co.uk/opinion/my-favourite-vest-ever%E2%80%A6-heavy-rain.

Insert Tactics Here

I was so glad to see the *MW2* letter concerning the 'Tactical Insertion' cheats printed in your mag. This is, without doubt, the most annoying

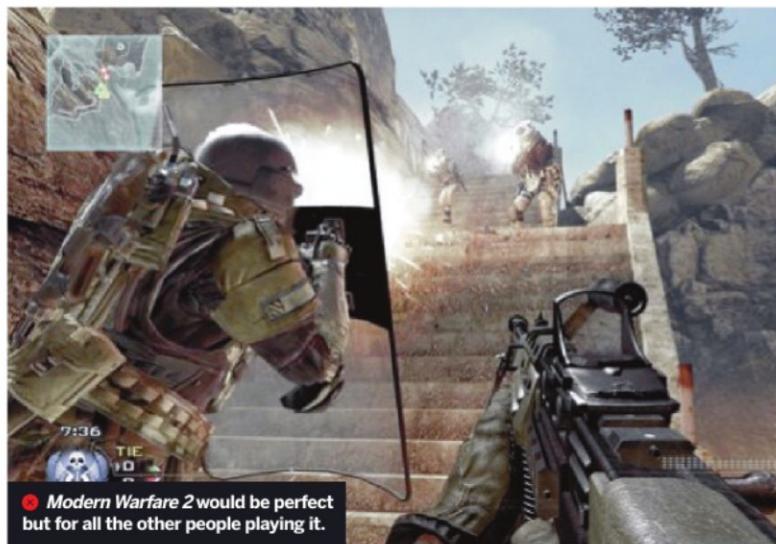


flaw in an otherwise perfect online game. Game after game of *Free-For-All*, I find myself obsessed with hunting these people down and it's ruining the game for me. I'm telling myself 'just leave the game, start a new one' but why should I? I'm trying to play the game and these idiots are ruining it for everyone.

As far as I can see the only way to stop this completely would be to take Tactical Insertion from the game entirely. 'But what about us snipers?' I hear you cry. Well why not give people the option to 'switch off' Tactical Insertion. A *Free-For-All* (No Tactical Insertion) option. I would even suggest giving Tactical Insertion a time limit. I really hope a solution to this problem is found soon. Infinity Ward need to pull their collective fingers out now! What would you guys suggest?

Colin Johnston, County Antrim

We'd suggest either excluding Tactical Insertions from *Free-For-All*s altogether





Write in, and win! Every full-length letter we print receives a free game, courtesy of Konami. For each letter we included this month, the sender wins a copy of Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker, which is available now for the PSP (£29.99).

STUPID letter



Hands up who doesn't want BioShock 3...

Power To The People

I think Sony should give us gamers the power to stop games from being released on the PS3. Why? To reduce the number of crappy games clogging up the schedules and improve the overall quality of PS3 software. Every couple of months Sony could publish the upcoming schedule and let us vote through the PSN on dubious-looking stinkers – any title that gets above a certain number of votes is blocked from being released on our beloved console. I guarantee this would result in fewer pointless sequels, slapped-together movie tie-ins, shoddy ports and just plain awful games.
Gordon Mclean, Greenock

It would, but it would also result in less games full stop. Possibly none at all. No game company is going to invest a lot of money into developing a game for the PS3 only to be forced to can it just because PSN users don't like the cut of its jib. Crappy games do suck, but they don't really impact on your life if you're wise enough to consult reputable publications like **Play** and **NowGamer.com** before making a purchase. Sony does operate an approval process to maintain certain standards on the PS3, but we'd have to admit there have been a few titles lately that made us think those standards ought to be a little higher.

or at least, as you suggest, having an alternative 'No Tactical Insertions' version of Free-For-All, so that those sad bastards can spam away at each other in their own tragically pathetic game type. Either that or... cut their goolies off.

Yeah, I know we already had a letter about this a couple of months back, but it still does my head in and I still think Infinity Ward (if there's anyone left working there) should do something about it.

F.A.Q.

It will also be a good idea to maybe make 'Play Youth'. Where you can employ teenagers aged 13-16.
Sam Derbyshire (aged 13), via email
It'll be like Hitler youth but with better facial hair and a tolerant, inclusive attitude to all colours, creeds and religions. EXCEPT THE BASTARD XBOTS!

God I hate when there's too many great games! Now I have to live with this awful pressure on my back of which games to get.
James Ward, via email
See this month's Stupid Letter for an alternative take.

I don't want to ban *Call Of Duty* but I just want a bit more plot in it.
Shivam Sharma, via email
I don't want to set the world on fire, I just want to set a flame in your heart.

Do You Not Think There Are Too Many War Games Out There.
Daniel Hore, via email
No, but I do think there are too many capital letters and too few question marks in your letter.

I might get a PS Move, but I probably won't.
Andrew Meehan, via email
We might care, we might not.

THIS MONTH, YOU'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT...



■ All review scores ever being wrong **40%**
■ PlayStation Move **35%**
■ Call Of Duty **22%**
■ Red Dead Redemption **3%**

PLAY
GOPLAY
the forum...



The official Play and GoPlay magazine forum
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Choice topics from the Play forum.
Join the discussion at **www.play-mag.co.uk**

SUBJECT: PLAY MAGAZINE DISCUSSION

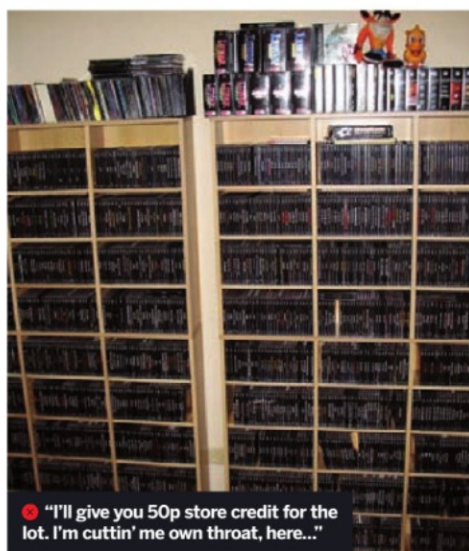
Topic: Play Issue 192 Feedback
I'm liking the feel of the mag now, as well. Nice and soft when you're walking to the bog.
the bossman

SUBJECT: HEADLINES

Topic: Heavy Rain
My friend played it and got the most depressing endings to a game ever.
UberCool_UberGoff

SUBJECT: FIRST PLAY

Topic: Lets Talk About Peace Walker
It's like they think we're all creepy, stalkerish pervs who fap to jailbait. Day 1 purchase.
hazy89



Fair Trade-in

When I receive the Platinum Trophy on a game or get bored of it I usually trade it in for store credit and although some stores offer better prices/deals than others I still don't think any offer a fair trade-in price. For new games you're looking at getting around 50 per cent of the price they are getting sold for, fairly new/old games will get you about 20 per cent and a couple of pounds for older games. I've also heard that kids get scammed off and receive a lot less than adults. I understand that shops are trying to make a profit but not so much when I get £1.50 for *Tomb Raider: Underworld* and find it getting re-sold for £19.99. I think there should be a chain of shops that deals with pre-owned games only and gives you at least 50 per cent trade-in value of what they are re-selling it for. I would like to hear from Play to see what their view on this matter is.
Tadzio Gieldon-Bruce, West Lothian

Trade-ins are a complex and controversial issue within the games industry. Game

publishers hate them because they impact on the sales of new games, and publishers get none of the profit from pre-owned sales. Retailers and customers, on the other hand, love them. Customers because they get games cheaper, and retailers because the profit margin is greater than with new games. The profit margin is so tight on new games that many games retail businesses depend on pre-owned sales, and those seemingly unfair trade-in rates, for survival. So we can understand your sentiment, but there are reasons trade-in prices are what they are. And if you think your games are worth more than you're being offered, there's always eBay.

The BURNING issues

The stuff we want to hear about!



- 1 Has your life been affected by *Peggle*? If so, we can help. Actually we probably can't. Sorry.
- 2 Place your bets: when is the PS3 going to overtake the 360 on global hardware sales?
- 3 Do you think Sony's PlayStation division should become a socialist democracy in which all decisions are voted on by users?

☒ **YES!** I would like to subscribe to Play

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the big story





INFAMOUS 2



A LITTLE OVER A YEAR SINCE THE RELEASE OF ITS FIRST GAME ON THE PS3, SUCKER PUNCH PRODUCTIONS IS ALREADY GEARING UP FOR ANOTHER HUGE EXCLUSIVE RELEASE ON THE CONSOLE. COLE MACGRATH IS COMING BACK WITH A NEW LOOK, A NEW CITY AND NEW, EVEN MORE AMAZING POWERS THAN BEFORE

In the years that come will we look back at the life of the PS3 and think of a pre and post-*Uncharted 2* age? Will the whole games industry look back and see the world that way? Right now it certainly seems as if Naughty Dog's adventure has become the benchmark by which all games must be judged and by which all developers are judging themselves. Sucker Punch is no different in this regard. Thanks to its close ties with Sony, Sucker Punch has been able to speak and collaborate with the Santa Monica-based developer for some time. With the advice and support of all of Sony's key studios, Sucker Punch has taken *inFamous* apart and emerged with something tighter, bolder and more ambitious for *inFamous 2*.

Visiting Sucker Punch at its Seattle base, it was clear that the team has been brutally honest about what went wrong and what went right in the last game. "No stone is being left unturned," development director Chris Zimmerman told us. "We're taking everything about the game and we're making it better." And that didn't seem to be any kind of exaggeration based on what we've seen. Every aspect of the original game is being revamped and rethought to get more from it. The most obvious and apparent shift is with our hero (or antihero) Cole MacGrath, who has gone through something of a makeover and there's a very important reason for that.

"One of the big differences in trying to make the game more personal is that we wanted to make full-on mo-capped cut-scenes like you see in a lot of awesome games these days," game director Nate Fox said. "That meant we had to

find an actor who could do both the voice and the motion and the emotion to carry Cole. The guy we had from the first game was a voiceover actor [Jason Cottle] and we needed to have someone who had the full package, so we recast him with this actor called Eric Layton who really embodies Cole MacGrath."

And so Cole has joined a long list of superheroes (Superman, Batman and soon Spider-Man) who have seen a change in actor over the years. Zimmerman explained how Sucker Punch's inexperience with the PS3 was the main reason behind the lack of cut-scenes in *inFamous* and in turn how that hampered its story. "We weren't happy with the job we were able to do as storytellers in *inFamous*," he said. "We were hamstrung by the technology a little bit. In *inFamous* – you'll have to trust me on this – you really didn't want to get that close to those characters, we really needed to keep

art director Mathias Lorenz made clear to us. There's a reason behind every decision and change to Cole's model.

"Digitally, it's like we're building a better actor," Lorenz told us. "There's a higher resolution in game, higher fidelity and a better face rig. From the outside he's taken his jacket off and that's because New Marais is in the south as opposed to the northeast where Empire City was. It's hot, it's humid. The other reason is that with our focus on parkour we want to be able to see his muscles move, show better arm motion to better represent him as a superhero in action." So Cole is literally and metaphorically stripping back the layers giving us a more nuanced and toned hero, ready for the fight of his life.

You may also have noticed Lorenz mentioned a place called New Marais and that's because it's the new setting for *inFamous 2*. New Marais is a town inspired by New Orleans and offers all

the diversity, charm and dark horrors that its real-world counterpart is famous for. Frankly, it's a little bit surprising

INFAMOUS 2 IS TIGHTER, BOLDER AND MORE AMBITIOUS THAN THE ORIGINAL

the camera away from them. This time around that's not a problem, we can zoom right in. That's a technology thing, but we're not doing it for technology's sake, we're doing it because it really helps us tell the story."

So, with a new outlook on its cut-scenes came a new actor, a new look and plenty more besides. Cole seems less gruff, more accessible and looks more like the extreme athletes that inspired his design. "His ability to climb and use his electrical powers in tandem defines who he is," added Fox. "That needed to be reflected in how he looks." But it was more than just an aesthetic shift, as

no one has thought to use it as a setting for a superhero before. "I like to call it a modern day Gomorrah because that's exactly the kind of place I would like to go in a videogame," Fox agreed. "My dad was from New Orleans and I heard a lot of stories about the place so it kind of took on this mythic quality of a dark, Gothic place where you could get stabbed in an alley. There's cool architecture, beautiful plantations, freaky swamps and great music and food and a huge diversity of people. It becomes this fantastic spot to put a town in need. A place that is in trouble that calls for a superhero." ➤

WITH HIS ARSE WELL AND TRULY HANDED TO HIM BY THE BEAST COLE MUST SEEK OUT WAYS OF ACCELERATING HIS POWER DEVELOPMENT

➤ Wait a moment! Did Fox say swamps? That's right, New Marais is significantly more diverse than Empire City and that means bustling city streets, slums and places where Cole's abilities mean virtually nothing. As we learnt from the first *inFamous*, water and electricity don't mix. "This is something we've never tried before with the *inFamous* franchise, letting you go into places that for Cole, who is an electrical superhero, is at a great disadvantage because they are more organic in nature," continued Fox. "Again it's just variety so that you get this really rich experience for how you move through the space and encounter enemies."

While the water may not be good for Cole, the broader environment offered by the swamps is ideal for translating Cole's parkour skills to a new environment. Once again everything is being pulled together to make Cole look, feel and act cooler and more heroic than ever. Putting him in a location like this is just another example of that, but as with all superhero tales, things are never as simple as they appear on the surface. "I lived in Florida for a time and if you don't mow your grass for a week it's up to your waist," offered Lorenz. "We're playing on that. The swamps are reclaiming the city, encroaching on the city."

And as you may have worked out already it's all because of that dastardly Ray Sphere from the first game, the device that triggered Cole's powers and nearly brought down Empire City. New Marais hasn't suffered the same fate yet, but it turns out that this was the place that the Ray Sphere was developed and Cole is in desperate need of the technology. "*inFamous 2* starts hot on the heels of where *inFamous* left off," said Fox. "We start with you meeting this horrifying and very powerful monster that we call the Beast. Now, the Beast was kind of hinted at at the end of the first game, that it

was some kind of civilisation-ending power that you had been prepared to be able to fight all throughout the first game and here we just give him to you right at the beginning and you lose."

With his arse well and truly handed to him by the Beast, just as various figures in the last game had warned him would happen, Cole must seek out ways of accelerating his power development or face losing even more than he has already lost. "Cole starts as a superhero and he confronts an enemy who is even bigger and badder and stronger and he absolutely must get powers capable of defeating this enemy. So, he goes to New Marais, which is where the Ray Sphere device that gave Cole his powers was developed. In *inFamous 2* you start as a superhero and you become a super-hero. You do some extra levelling up."

This could well be the point at which Cole suffers the fate of so many avenging heroes and sees his powers stripped from him to be earned once again. Sucker Punch didn't want to commit completely to whether or not this will happen, but it was clear that if it did Cole would retain most of his abilities from the last game rather than having to start from scratch. "*inFamous* just took off once Cole could use his parkour and electrical abilities to zip along high-voltage lines and float his way through the sky," admitted Fox. "It suddenly became very alive, so we start you right there in the second game."

So while Cole may arrive in New Marais battered and bruised it seems unlikely he will arrive with nothing but the tight black T-shirt on his back, which is handy. As we've mentioned this is not a city for the faint of heart. New Marais is crying out for a hero even if it isn't as run-down and decrepit as Empire City. As we looked around the city centre, swamps and plantations that make up this new locale we were blown away by the amount of colour,



THE ICE IS RIGHT

Cole becomes a much cooler customer with ice powers

AS REVEALED AT E3 during Sony's press conference, Cole isn't going to be restricted to electric powers in New Marais. In his quest to defeat the Beast he has come to this city to find a scientist who can enhance his abilities. We saw what that meant in terms of making his electrical powers even more potent, but it also means another kind of elemental power, creating ice. It's another classic superhero ability and one that we're sure will be tied into Cole's parkour skills in much the same way as electricity saw him grinding high voltage wires and floating between rooftops. How ice and electricity will combine is an equally intriguing question, but Sucker Punch wasn't ready to reveal this little secret just yet.

It does pose the interesting question of just how far Cole's evolution as a superhero will go? Could he unlock even more elemental powers such as pyrokinesis (the ability to control flames) or will such power development be tied into his karma choices (ice for being good, fire for being bad)? These and so many other questions will have to be answered at some later date as Sucker Punch wouldn't be drawn on them. However, this little peek at how much further *inFamous 2* is taking this franchise is a tantalising one that hints at so much more to come. The months we have between now and *inFamous 2*'s release are already looking like they'll be packed with revelations.





• The swamps of New Marais offer a brand-new challenge for Cole.



• After his antics in the last game, where do Zeke's loyalties lie now?



• Inspired by New Orleans, New Marais is a very different city.



• Cole's new powers are more destructive than ever before.

texture and light it was able to generate while still looking sleazy, dirty and quite threatening. And while common crooks may be lurking around any corner, there are actually two main antagonist groups (beyond the terrifying Beast) that Sucker Punch revealed to us.

The Militia is an organisation that is terrorising New Marais and it considers itself to be a human supremacist group, hunting down superpowered individuals and killing them on sight. Since the Empire City incident people have been popping up everywhere with strange new abilities and powers. There are plenty of people who feel rather threatened by that and so the Militia is building quite a following. It doesn't help that the second group, corrupted humans who have been emerging from the swamps with horrifying and intimidating deformities, have been kidnapping people. Cole will be placed in the middle of these two, attempting to defeat both.

To this end Cole will be levelling up and learning and earning new abilities and picking up some new toys he can use against his enemies. The first we saw was a new melee weapon that looked a bit like a huge tuning fork, two parallel iron rods, which Cole can charge up and swing around like a bat. The results are electrifying, throwing human and monster around with equal force and impact. "It acts as an amplifier of his powers," Fox explained. "He stores up energy between the two poles and when it connects with somebody it transfers into them as well as knocking the bejesus out of the enemy." He went on to admit this was an area Sucker Punch didn't do a good enough job on last time out. "One of the big superhero conventions that I don't think we did a great job of in the first game was what everyone wants to do, knocking somebody's block off," he told us.

With these new melee abilities came another addition to *inFamous*, that was a much more dynamic camera during fights that really zoomed in tight to the action. This, according to Lorenz, was an important move to make you feel more connected to the action. "With the normal camera you're sort of outside the experience and now we drive the camera right in there," he said. And frankly it worked, as the melee fighting looks much more interesting and inviting.

Cole's main port of call when it comes to enemies is still his electric-bolt attack, though, and even this is seeing an upgrade. "We looked at all the powers in the first game and thought about how we could make them feel more immediate," revealed Fox. "Now he can shoot lightning, but if he wants to land a heavier blow he'll use

his rear arm. His body is more involved, it's a small change, but it is a good indication of just how we're embracing these more visceral gameplay moments." The result is the ability to throw combinations of attacks that go beyond simply shooting light bolts or throwing Shock Grenades, mixing in a more varied array of light and heavy attacks that should feel more natural and fluid. The fact that you will have enemies that use both projectile and melee weapons will also likely affect how you approach them.

Fox also said that you should expect a regular update of your abilities at much the same rate as you experienced last time. "We were very pleased in *inFamous* that our mantra 'a new power, about every hour' worked," he told us. "We're making the game to experience what it's like to be a superhero and that's about having these awesome abilities and getting new ones is exciting. We're going to keep giving you powers at a very brisk rate because it feels

YOU'LL GET NEW POWERS REGULARLY



WHO'S IN INFAMOUS 2?

Faces to keep an eye out for



COLE MACGRATH

Our hero has had a makeover, but his core powers and values remain the same. He was manipulated throughout *inFamous* to be the superhero he's become and must now prove he has what it takes against an even greater threat.



THE BEAST

Facing the Beast is what Cole was preparing for all along, but at the start of *inFamous 2* the Beast will defeat him. Now Cole must find more power by finding a new Ray Sphere making him tough enough to end this threat to humanity.



ZEKE DUNBAR

Once Cole's best friend, it's unclear where Zeke stands now having betrayed Cole to Kessler. He will return in *inFamous 2*, so will he be helping out Cole again or will he be looking to take him down with the Militia?



ALDEN TATE

Alden is a powerful Conduit with telekinetic abilities who seemingly survived his battle with Cole. However, his father created the First Sons, the group Kessler took over, so he could well still have an interest in Cole's mission.



MOYA JONES

This DARPA agent claimed to be John White's wife, but John works for the NSA and the two simply want to get hold of the Ray Sphere. Her fate was unclear, but since Cole is after more Ray Sphere tech it'd make sense that Moya is, too.



SASHA

The first boss from *inFamous*, Sasha was seemingly in a relationship with Kessler before the events of the game. As such Kessler rescued her before she could be killed by Cole. Will she be looking for revenge on Cole now?

> so good, but we're also starting the game off with a lot more powers than you did in the first game. It's just so much more fun to be able to smoothly transition between these electrified wires and climb buildings and link it all together to be a superpowered parkour master."

But frankly, that's all small fry. Cole has come to New Marais to learn some super-cool new abilities capable of taking down the Beast. He's going to need more than a slightly more powerful bolt to finish off that monstrosity. "An attack helicopter represents a pretty serious enemy so Cole has to use a bigger weapon," said Fox before showing us one such new attack in Cole's arsenal on an incoming 'copter. "We call that move the Ionic Vortex and it's a big cyclone of electrical energy that picks things up and throws them hard against the wall. It's a good representation of the scale of violence we're trying to achieve so that you get the superhero feeling."

The Ionic Vortex was certainly impressive. Cole channels it Guile style, a bit like a Sonic Boom, as electricity ran down the walls of the street he was on and a cyclone appeared in the centre. Anything and everything that stood in his way became swept up by it, kicking up dust and debris as well as cars and people. "Of course, Cole is a very strong superhero and he lives in the real world, so when he uses these

INFAMOUS 2 SHOULD BE EXPLOSIVE WHEN IT ARRIVES

powers things happen," Fox added. "He's a titan inside a fragile human world. We're trying to make it more personal and visceral to amp it up so that it all has that reality to you as a gamer."

And by reality Fox in part means destructibility, which has been given a much wider remit in *inFamous 2*. In the first game there were several types of scenery that could be destroyed by gunfire or electricity, but now there's a great deal more debris and carnage on the streets. Having found a little extra grunt in the PS3, Sucker Punch has got rubbish flying all over the place when Cole unleashes his full might and when you mix that in with explosions, dust, smoke and all New Marais' spectacular lighting effects you get action sequences like nothing you've seen before. We asked if the damage caused by Cole would



This new setting for *inFamous 2* is full of unknown challenges.

be persistent and the team admitted it hadn't fully decided on that yet, but suggested that it would tend to lean towards having the world regenerate, if only so you could destroy it all again. "Destructibility is something that you can argue both ways on," said Fox. "One way is more realistic and one is more fun, but in general we go for the fun even in a tough call like that where I can totally see both sides of the coin."

'Following the fun' is an important mantra for Sucker Punch, so even if it's trying to establish a believable world for Cole to inhabit it knows some reality needs to be sacrificed in the name of good gameplay. That philosophy could also have an impact on the Karma system which will return from the first game. The big question is to what degree the pursuit of a good karmic ending could hamper your ability to use those show-stopping powers. After all you can't be much of a hero if you keep catching civilians in your shockwaves. Getting the balance right seems to be something that even Sucker

Punch is a little torn over.

"One of my favourite moments from the whole development cycle of *inFamous* was when I first saw

the lightning power," Zimmerman told us. "I just started laughing uncontrollably. You don't want players to lose that ability to unleash these massive and powerful attacks on things. You certainly don't want them to feel like they could do that if they weren't trying to be a good guy."

"You could also make the argument, though, that for your choice to save the citizens to be meaningful you have to be giving something up otherwise your choice is meaningless. Balancing those two points of view between being a superhero and using your powers and having your decisions have weight is interesting." Nate Fox also offered his view on things. "We recognise that it is fun to use the powers we've given you and these weapons and we don't want to be jerks and punish you for doing things that are fun," he said. "The



Parkour remains at the heart of the game.





● Using new melee attacks should help vary up the combat this time.



● Sucker Punch doesn't want to punish you for using cool powers.

game is meant to be fun so we'll always look for every opportunity to allow it to be, even if you're role-playing as a good guy."

So, while you may not want to use the Ionic Vortex too often, you won't see your Karma meter swing around like a weather vane if you do. Not that you'll see that meter at all according to Zimmerman, who insists Sucker Punch has taken on feedback from gamers about this feature of *inFamous*. "This time around I think we've got a more mature approach, letting people have the ability to make those ethical choices in a way that feels natural, important and meaningful," he told us. "I think people's criticisms of *inFamous* generally were reasonable. People thought the Karma system felt mechanical and the idea that I was making these weighty philosophical choices and that caused a needle to move on screen was a bit artificial. I'd be surprised if you saw a Karma meter on screen this time, I think we'll do something that feels more natural."

What's more the choices you made in the first game will have an impact on this sequel, according to Fox, as Sucker Punch is building its new game with two very distinct endings based upon choices you make through your adventure. "If you're forced to be good, then you're not really being good is our argument and the game will support two very different endings, which are the natural consequences of some tough decisions you have to make," explained Fox. "We will also pay attention to where you were at the end of the last game."

So the morality system will be better, the city is more vibrant, dangerous and interactive than

ever, the combat has been improved, you'll have lots of new powers and the whole thing is being packaged in a story with better cut-scenes and stronger narration. Could Sucker Punch possibly be doing any more? Well, anything could happen according to Fox, who revealed a little about the way in which the studio can quickly shift gears when a new idea strikes it.

"We're not a large institution that can't make up its mind quickly," he said. "We change things weekly that can be a big deal and always because we ask ourselves what's going to provide the best experience. Having everybody work on the same game at the same time means that you're in the trenches with your friends and when we hit big milestones or big achievements we share in that. That creates an awesome esprit de corps and camaraderie that makes working more pleasurable. I'm glad we work on one game at a time because we're all very emotionally committed."

The final result of which should be something explosive when *inFamous 2* arrives next year. "The game's going to give you a heart attack, you're so present and time just goes away," Fox said. "I think that's the hallmark of all great videogames, so we're trying to achieve that. The open-world superhero genre is great as this rich and untapped territory and we want to live up to all the expectations that this genre should deliver to people." On this early showing we have to say that we believe him. *inFamous 2* could well wind up being up there with the likes of *Uncharted 2* as one of the most impressive PS3 exclusives around. At the very least it will be one hell of a ride.

ON THE FENCE

No more chain-link challenge says Sucker Punch

WHILE THERE WERE many cool and amazing things Cole MacGrath could do in the first *inFamous*, one of the most extraordinary weaknesses of this superhero was how challenged he was by the humble chain-link fence. He couldn't climb them, couldn't shoot through them and generally found them a problem. Development director Chris Zimmerman was happy to concede it was an issue, but one that will not be repeated in *inFamous 2*.

"You probably won't be stuck if you see a chain-link fence in this game," he told us. "You'll probably be able to climb those. It's pretty reasonable to say that something I can do a superhero ought to be able to do, so I can climb a chain-link fence, I've done it before and Cole really ought to be able to as well. There's more spectacular stuff as well obviously, but even the basic stuff is important."



PREVIEW

The games that will shape the PlayStation 4



● The Minigun: nature's great equaliser.

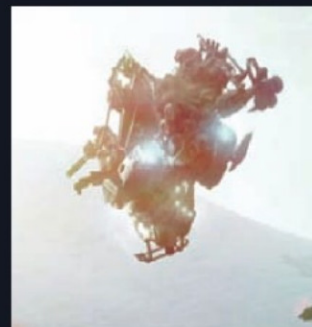
NO 'I' IN 'MULTIPLAYER'

That is when 'i' stands for 'information', at least

MULTIPLAYER WAS A big part of *Killzone 2* and number three will be no different – the problem being we haven't actually seen any of it. Sony is expected to reveal more later in the year, but all we know so far is that Guerrilla is aiming for a similar difference in feel to that between single-player in the last two iterations. We're talking 'massive' and with a real focus on the community. One other element we're free to speculate on is 3D – if a 3D player is battling a 2D player, will they have an advantage? Is this something Guerrilla will specifically tackle? Or are we just talking nonsense? Who knows.



● The trademark red eyes of the Helghast still send a shiver down our spines.



FIRST LOOK



● Wrap up warm for the winter, lads.



● See, this time it actually looks like this – not a target render.



● 3D oil rigs are the way of the future.

RELEASE DATE: TBC 2011

Killzone 3

Buy two (dimensions), get one (dimension) free!

Where could they possibly begin the tale of *Killzone 3*? The Helghan capital, Pyrrhus, has been nuked. The two surviving heroes, Sev and Rico, are left with a sense of relief overwhelmed by regret. And, to make matters worse, the Helghast are pissed off – their huge armada eliminating the remainder of the ISA forces attests to that. So why not pick it up from that point? Guerrilla obviously sees the potential for intense openings to games and – while we're yet to see anything of the opening – we've been told the story continues directly where the last game left off. Things are clearly going to get a bit messy.

What we've seen of *Killzone 3* so far feels a million miles away from what we originally saw of the second game. Not that the setting is different, oh no, but in the way we're actually being shown the real game from the outset. This is something Guerrilla has acknowledged in recent interviews – the original trailer for *Killzone 2* (pre-rendered and derided by most gamers/the internet as being intentionally

misleading) is a thing of the past. What we see is what we get. And what we see is ruddy spectacular-looking. Vast, open expanses and a general increase in graphical fidelity are just two of the aspects pushing the PS3 to – apparently – near 100 per cent of its capacity. There are numerous improvements to enemy AI, meaning they'll now actively hunt you down, capture you

flowing experience – attempting to eliminate almost all loading screens – and a game more open to those outside of the hardcore; the main audience for *Killzone 2*. Don't misconstrue this as a game dumbed down or changed so much it no longer appeals to its core audience – it's just a case of opening things up so they have a broader appeal.

The story continues directly where the last game left off. Things are clearly going to get a bit messy

in pincer movements and generally make your life a lot harder.

Away from the performance side of things – though obviously a very important part of the *Killzone* experience – are other modifications put into action by a company who has gone out of its way to listen to fan feedback. Controls are now open to far more customisation options, so players used to a particular method of controlling their FPSs will be able to muck about until things are how they want them. Guerrilla is pushing for a smoother, more

In-game mechanics are another area that appear to have received some real attention, if only being heavily refined over experiencing wholesale changes. Players can still duck in and out of cover as they see fit, ducking behind whatever debris sits in their way to avoid the incoming potshots of a pissed off Helghan. But Guerrilla has opened the playing style up a bit so those more accustomed to a run-'n'-gun shooter are catered for, and a greater emphasis on melee combat is something that will help those who aren't about to

PREVIEW



Enemies using jetpacks can be dangerous beggars – watch the skies.



One of these things would be a great help with getting to work.



stand cowering behind a pillar with gun in hand (yes, we're mocking you cowardly cover types). Brutal is a word being thrown around a lot when describing *Killzone 3*'s melee combat – as well as useful and a welcome addition, naturally – but brutal is the main focus. Eye-stabbing, kneecap-busting, gasmask-smashing close combat is the name of the CQC game and, while it can offer a 'brutal' visual reward for your daring, it's also just a useful in-game mechanic.

Killzone 3 will have much larger levels than before – words along the lines of 'ten times bigger' have been uttered – and this is for a very good reason. While we will be seeing more locales than the destroyed urban regions of before, with jungles and other more alien backdrops, this increase in size isn't just to make the player coo. No, part of the increase in size is to accommodate the use of jetpacks. While they function more as jump-extenders, these spider-like contraptions

that fit on your back open up the combat opportunities to far more tactical depth, offering as many death-from-above opportunities as you would expect from a massive metal device that launches you 20

feet in the air. They also open up opportunities to kill jetpack-toting enemies in comedic fashions, which is always nice.

Brutal is a word that's being thrown around a lot when describing *Killzone 3*'s melee combat

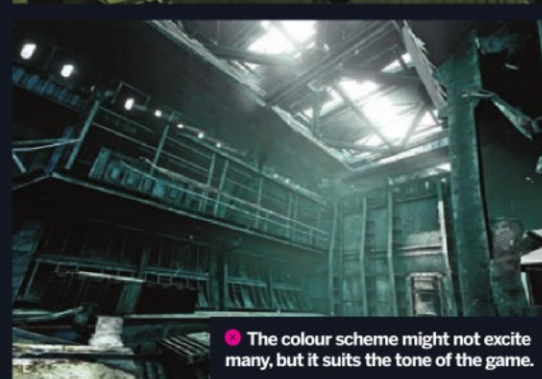
Then, of course, there's the small matter of 3D. Adding a greater sense of depth perception is something that could have tangible effects on the game, from making navigation of platforms more natural to helping you spot an enemy sniper from across the map. It's not a technology that everyone will be able to take advantage of, but it doesn't look like something you need to experience to be fully

immersed – nor is it any kind of a burden on the performance of the game (30fps, 720p in both modes, Guerrilla is claiming). Simply put, it's just an interesting addition to an already great-looking package.

There's a lot more to come from *Killzone 3*, so while we may be a little short on details for now we do know many things: it will support Move, it does look mesmerising in 3D and the characters swear just as much as they did before. Over the coming months even more will become apparent and we'll get a chance to spend a serious amount of hours assessing this 3D stuff and if it's as good as we think – it really could be a game-changer.

Killzone 3 is being developed by Guerrilla Games. Check out www.killzone.com for more details.

It certainly doesn't look like a friendly place.



The colour scheme might not excite many, but it suits the tone of the game.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Continuing the adventures of Sev and Rico is something we can't wait for.
- It's pushing "nearly 100 per cent" of PS3's capabilities, so it looks good.

- Jetpacks, jump-packs, whatever you want to call them they look brilliant.
- Oh yeah, there's that whole '3D' thing, too, we suppose.

READ ME

You've probably played *Killzone 2*, so why not play *Killzone: Liberation* on PSP instead? We gave it 83% in issue 146 – it's really quite good fun.



● We think these things are like angry buses. In the future.



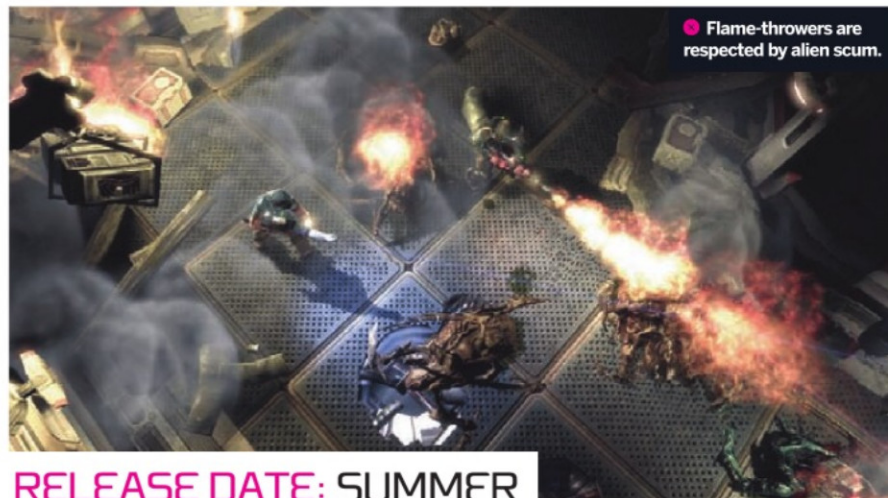
● "Spider?! Getitoffgetitoffgetitoff!"



● Imagine these near-Nazi bastards running at you *IN 3D*.



● Allotments are not respected by alien scum.



● Flame-throwers are respected by alien scum.

RELEASE DATE: SUMMER

Alien Breed: Impact

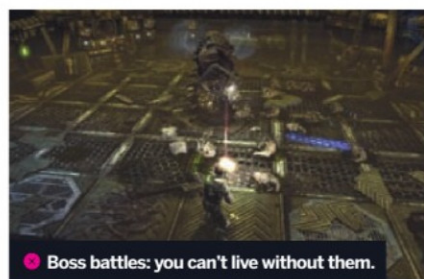
If it Breeds, we can kill it

We were hurt at first when we realised Team17's revival of *Alien Breed*, entitled *Evolution*, was only going to 360 and avoiding our wonderful black boxes. We should have had more faith, to be fair – we're actually getting an improved version over the Xbox, with community suggestions taken on board to improve the game in ways we didn't expect to see. Oh, and we get the snazzy new title of *Impact* – though we have no idea if the community suggested that.

The existing framework of the original will still be making its way to PSN, but it

will be improved and expanded upon in numerous ways. More customisation options are available to players, as well as an 'enhanced' co-operative experience (though no further explanations were offered) and a whole new Prologue campaign for players to battle through. The thing that has us most intrigued, however, is Team17's claim that the difficulty of *Impact* has been significantly upped since *Evolution*'s release.

One complaint from Xbox 360 gamers was that the Live release became rather tiresome, and this was in no small part down to the fact it wasn't a huge challenge. Bringing the game back to the series' roots of bastard-hardness is something we'd welcome both as sadists and as people who find a challenge brings more interest and longevity to a game. Let us, indeed, rock.



● Boss battles: you can't live without them.

Alien Breed: Impact is being developed by Team17. Check out www.team17.com for more details.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- An improved version of any game coming to PS3 makes us happy.
- A classic series revived for PSN is something we like to see.
- Shooting aliens with a chum: our idea of a good night's activity.
- It'll make us quote *Aliens* even more than we already do. Stay frosty, and so on.

PREVIEW



● *MotorStorm: Apocalypse* looks incredibly good, just as the first two games in the series did.

RELEASE DATE: TBC 2011

MotorStorm: Apocalypse

PS3

Here in my car, I feel safest of all. Except for the earthquakes

The first game was the launch title – an effort to show the world what the PlayStation 3 could do while at the same time providing a fun experience. The second game wanted to ramp that up, to introduce new elements and to transpose the setting to somewhere you wouldn't expect it to go. The third game in the series is... well, it's insane. *Insane*. We were invited along to see the first showing of *MotorStorm: Apocalypse* and had the chance to play it for a few hours, and that's the

Simple: a massive earthquake has rendered the city uninhabitable, meaning you – almost – have a racing playground entirely to yourself to take part in some urban off-roading. But this isn't just a city of fallen-over buildings and a few potholes – this is a city where the earthquake's effects still aren't finished. While you're racing buildings will collapse around you, floors will displace, roads will become ramps and the sides of skyscrapers will become roads – the track you begin the race on will

evident in the new, linear, storyline-driven single-player mode. This means main characters to choose from – three, each representing a different difficulty, as well as a different campaign to take part in. Cut-scenes, voiceovers and whatever else you would expect from a storylined game will be present and accounted for. We don't think it's going to overwhelm the game and lead to *Final Fantasy*-esque cut-scenes of 30 minutes in length – instead it will offer a bit of grounding, a bit of focus to the experience and a bit more gravitas in a set-piece situation. Yes, we're saying it'll make you care more when a skyscraper is crumbling down around you. But you're not alone in these races, away from the other drivers. We said 'almost' to yourself earlier as there are two factions outside of the *MotorStorm* crew vying for your attention – the PMCs and the Crazies. The former are a band of mercenaries in the city to protect the richer residents' properties and belongings from looters, while the Crazies are... crazy. Both present ➤

While you're racing buildings will collapse, floors will displace and the sides of skyscrapers will become roads

only thought that keeps going through our heads – this game is insane, and in all the very good ways.

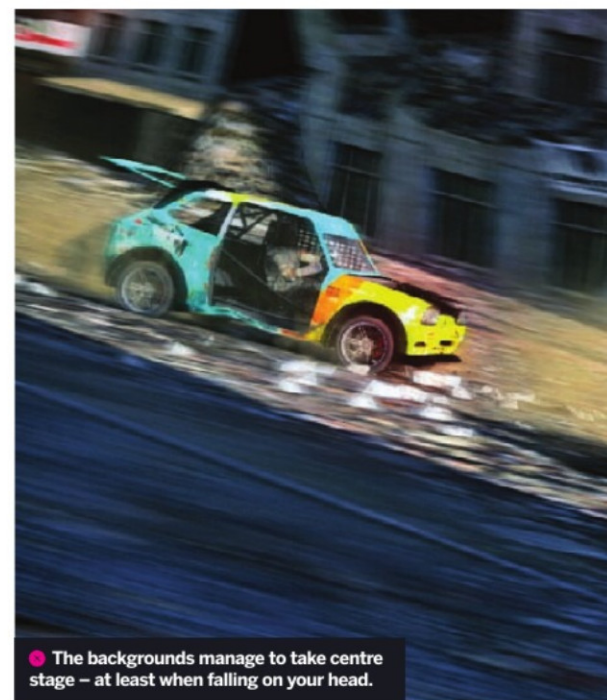
While numbers one and two took place in a desert and tropical island, respectively, three allows you to race around an abandoned city on the west coast of America. "But why is it abandoned?" we hear you ask.

not look anything like the track you finish on. The potential for chaos seems limitless, and it brings a true off-road feel to a game resolutely set in an urban area – a fine ruse on the developer's part, no doubt.

Chronology and persistence are two key elements Evolution Studios is aiming for, and this will be most



● Motorbikes once again need to avoid the attention of the bigger vehicles to succeed.



● The backgrounds manage to take centre stage – at least when falling on your head.



● The PMCs and the Crazies are out to make life as difficult for you as possible.



● A wide selection of vehicles will be available for the player.

THE EVOLUTION OF AN APOCALYPSE

Turning the pages of PlayStation 3 history

MOTORSTORM IS A franchise steeped in PlayStation 3 history but unlike a lot of recent racers *MotorStorm* has actually been improving with each new iteration...



MOTORSTORM 92%
A stunning launch title, it hinted at what the PS3 could achieve with next-gen racing games.



MOTORSTORM: PACIFIC RIFT 93%
This ramped up the action of the original to create a title unrivalled on PS3 at the time.



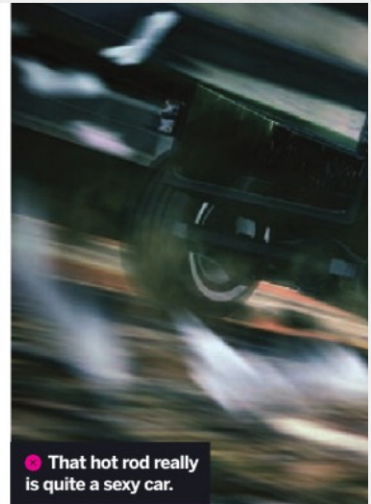
MOTORSTORM: APOCALYPSE ??%
We won't know until we spend more time with it but all the signs point to another triumph.



PREVIEW



● Real-time lighting is something Evolution is keen to big up.



● That hot rod really is quite a sexy car.



➤ different obstacles to the player, with the mercs shooting at and generally trying to mess up your race and the Crazies adopting wrecking-ball tactics (literally) and trying to smash you away from success. They're the people who bring an oil tanker on the road. In front of you. On fire. Basically.

Aside from the campaign mode are the more standard offerings of free play in both single and multiplayer. Here you can tackle any course you want with any vehicle – so you can indeed race that rooftop on a motorbike – and get involved in a bit of four-player split-screen action (which can be taken online this way against up to 12 others, meaning 16 players in total). When Matt Southern, game director of *MotorStorm: Apocalypse*, made the claim of '150 hours of gameplay' in total, we'll admit to scoffing a little. But then they told us about the game creation mode. In this icon-driven element that ships with the game, players can create rule sets for completely new game modes. The system was used by Evolution to create all of the race modes in the game and – very much like Media Molecule's approach with *LittleBigPlanet 1* and *2* – it's looking forward to what the public can do with its baby. A simple example would be a mode where eight players control superpowered big rigs and one other a small, weak motorbike. The bike has to do laps around the rigs to score points, the rigs have to smash up the bike to score. It's

a pretty straightforward approach as relayed to us by a developer, but it gives some idea of the level of creativity players can put back into *Apocalypse*. Every created mode can be placed online for others to mess about with, and a full ratings system will be implemented so you'll know whether to bother playing a certain way or not – we were even told that there's a chance for the best-received creations to enter the official rotation for online playlists. This is commitment we're starting to see coming from a lot of PS3 exclusives recently, and it makes us very happy to be owners right now.

Graphically things look to have been ratcheted up a notch or two,

100mph ball of metal moving by standing in front of it (clue: they lose). There's so much going on it can be hard to concentrate at first and though it certainly is anarchy on a vast scale, it's still surprisingly easy to get accustomed to all that is going on. Soon enough you don't even care that a house is about to fall on your car, or that the floor you were just about to land on collapsed before you managed to touch it.

All in all, we cannot wait to see more *MotorStorm: Apocalypse*. It looks to be exactly the game Evolution Studios has always wanted to make and this shows in every facet of what we've seen so far, from the game itself to the infectious

Everything that made us love MotorStorm is back and has been refined to a great degree

with things like dynamic lighting and headlights showing up for the first time – useful in the new night-time races, of course. But the major change when we're talking about looks has to be the sheer amount of activity going on – all tying into this 'insane' mantra we seem to be chanting at any given opportunity. Look into the background at any one time to see huge skyscrapers collapsing, forming new routes or blocking off old ones, helicopters soaring overhead, a flaming big rig zigzagging in front of you and two dozen Crazies trying to stop your

enthusiasm of the team. Everything that made us love *MotorStorm* is back – multiple vehicle types, different routes et al – and has been refined to a great degree, then placed in this ridiculously over-the-top situation. What we've played shows the promise of a truly fantastic game, but – time for the balance here – it will be up to the developer to make sure the finished product is indeed the total package. We're quietly, insanely, confident.

MotorStorm: Apocalypse is being developed by Evolution Studios. Check out www.evostudios.com for more details.



● *Apocalypse* is more story driven than previous *MotorStorm* games.



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Cliché alert: the developer has cranked everything up to 11.
- It's the *MotorStorm* we and Evolution have always wanted to see.
- If you get fed up of the game modes, just create your own.
- Like the first two games in the series, *Apocalypse* is a fine-looking game.

READ ME

The third *MotorStorm* game to come to PS3, and this time it looks very much like it's the one Evolution always wanted to make.



It's not the heaviest vehicle, but it'll still be good for ramming.



The urban environment is a welcome change of direction for the series.

AS FOR THE GAME ITSELF?

Because prattle is no substitute for playing the game

MOTORSTORM:
APOCALYPSE PLAYS like previous games in the series, unsurprisingly, but with one or two subtle changes. Handling is tighter as a result of driving on hard surfaces, meaning it feels far less floaty. It's also easier to have a steady ride as there are more smooth surfaces –

though they probably won't stay smooth for long. Essentially, Evolution has managed to translate the off-road feel to an urban environment surprisingly well. You wouldn't expect city racing to feel as wild as it does here, but it really is unlike any other 'street' racing game we've played to date.



Not only will you be up against other racers but you'll also need to outmanoeuvre *Apocalypse's* destructible tracks.



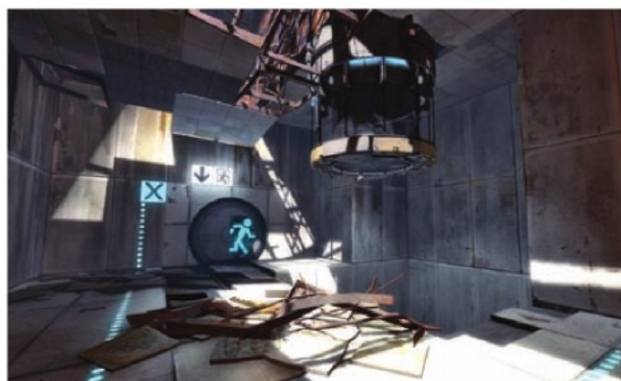
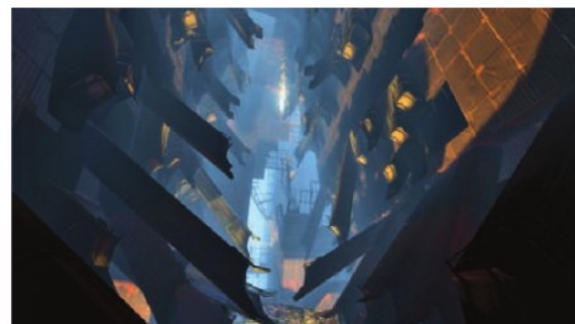
PREVIEW



Trees and vines have invaded Aperture Labs since the first game.

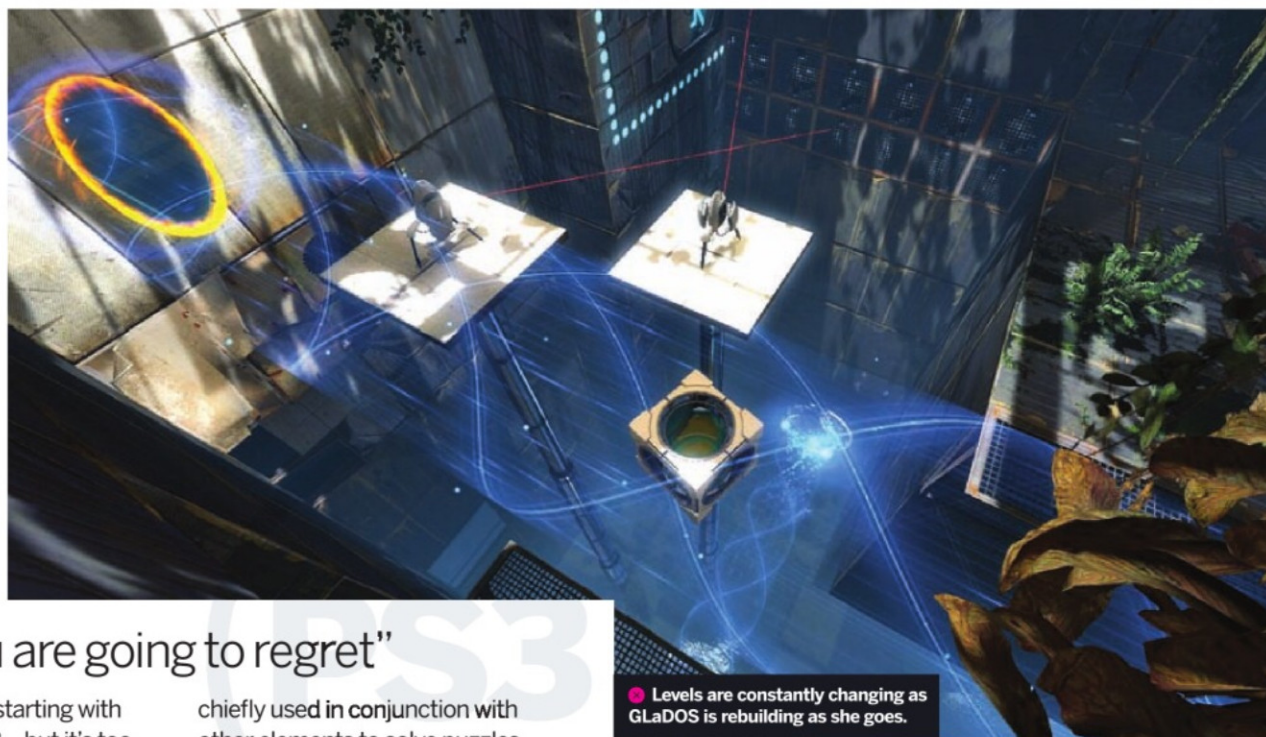


FIRST LOOK



RELEASE DATE: TBC 2011

Portal 2



Levels are constantly changing as GLaDOS is rebuilding as she goes.

"We both said a lot of things you are going to regret"

Time has passed since the first *Portal*. Aperture Labs, destroyed at the end of the first game, has long been reclaimed by nature. The labs are smashed and GLaDOS is dead but in *Portal 2* you return as Chell, the character from the original game. So what can we expect on our return?

First up there's a new ally – Wheatley. 'He' is a spherical CPU like GLaDOS but with an English accent who appears to be quite shy. Wheatley epitomises what Valve means when it talks of 'recapturing' the *Portal* spirit of the first game: namely the humour and the attachment to the game world that we all loved so much.

It's summed up nicely when GLaDOS reanimates herself. You've just arrived in GLaDOS's old lair with Wheatley when she begins the boot-up sequence. Wheatley tries to hack her systems to prevent it. This being *Portal* he begins trying

to guess passwords starting with AAAAA, then AAAAB... but it's too late: GLaDOS is alive. Hilarious.

There have been lots of new additions to the number of devices and powers in the game. Aerial Faith Plate is a super-power jump pad that can propel you and objects. The Thermal Discouragement Beam is a kind of super-hot laser – it burns rather than shoots objects. The Phenumatic Diversity Vent is essentially a huge vacuum tunnel that'll suck up and dispose of anything placed in it. Portals can suck things into them and clear the way and can also remove panels from walls to reveal secret areas.

The Repulsion and Propulsion Gels are liquids that dramatically change the properties of the surfaces that they cover. Repulsion lets you jump higher, and will bounce off surfaces when you fall from heights while Propulsion speeds up your movement. Both Gels are

chiefly used in conjunction with other elements to solve puzzles.

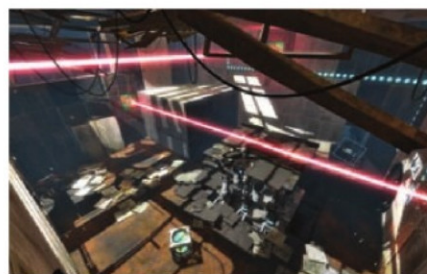
Finally, Excursion Tunnels can be created by the player and are basically energy tunnels that can transport the player and objects and can be entered at the ends of anywhere along the tunnel.

Overall, *Portal 2* has many more complex levels – the aim, says Valve, is to teach the player how to use each of the new elements and then to bring them all together in multi-layered single levels. These levels will also change dynamically – sometimes cinematically, sometimes as you're playing in game. In terms of size Valve told us that the game as a whole is more open, but *Portal 2* retains a similar structure to the first game but it is at least twice the size of the original.

Valve will be handling development of *Portal 2* and you can follow its progress here www.valvesoftware.com/games/portal2.html



Fans of the first game will love *Portal 2*.



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Valve has finally committed to the PS3 and that can only mean good things for the future.
- Gabe Newell himself told the world that the PS3 would be the best version on any console.
- Portal 2* will be twice as big as the original, which means even more mind-bending puzzles.
- GLaDOS returns as well as Valve's trademark humour so prepare to laugh and cry.

READ ME

The first *Portal* came courtesy of EA's excellent *Orange Box* but this iteration will be a full game in its own right.

DO THE ROBOT

Two player co-op confirmed

A TWO-PLAYER CO-OP has also been confirmed for the game, where the players take the roles of twin robots trying to escape the lab and will feature a separate story, with separate levels.



● This ice cream truck appears to have transformed into a killer robot... that's the last time we complain about the price of a 99.

● Our two biggest fears: clowns and machine guns.



● The PSN community looks to be getting a multiplayer experience to top all others.



TWISTED CHARACTERS

Who makes the cut?

THERE ISN'T A finalised character roster available at the time of writing, but we do have a few hopes for the lineup. Namely: Axel and Mr Slam. Axel because he's brilliant, and Mr Slam because we want to be able to drop enemies off the side of skyscrapers from his JCB. In the game, that is.



RELEASE DATE: TBC 2011

Twisted Metal

Metal heads rejoice

David Jaffe lied to us. He told the world that he would not be present at E3. He told us that if a new *Twisted Metal* game existed then he knew nothing about it. We want to feel sickened and betrayed by these fallacies, but when the reward for being lied to is indeed a new *Twisted Metal* which does indeed have Jaffe at the helm – well, we're alright with being sold a pup. This time.

You'll get a chill up your spine when you hear an ice cream truck jingle

The new *Twisted Metal* is being sold as "the best *Twisted Metal* ever made", and we can see why this bold claim is being made. Where *Twisted Metal: World Tour* brought the true car combat experience to the living room and *TM: Black* made it... well, blacker (and took it online), the new title – simply called *Twisted Metal* – brings with it the total package. It's dark, it has two to four player split-screen, up to 16 players online as well as aerial vehicles added to the mix

to accompany the usual bikes, cars, trucks and (hopefully) JCBs.

As for the game itself? This is the *Twisted Metal* we all know and love. While new control schemes have been thrown in to aid those who want to mix it up a bit, you can still use for accelerate and for brake – plus, unless we got a bit confused, you're still able to steer in hilariously unrealistic turning circles. It brings back some very positive memories on this end.

Modes we know of so far include team deathmatch and the objective-based 'Nuke' mode. But generally speaking it's all the same

– blowing stuff up, running over pedestrians, launching exploding hospital trolleys at opponents and getting a chill up your spine when you hear an ice cream truck jingle.

This is *Twisted Metal* exactly as we remember it, but with all the additions we could ever want from it. And we can't wait.

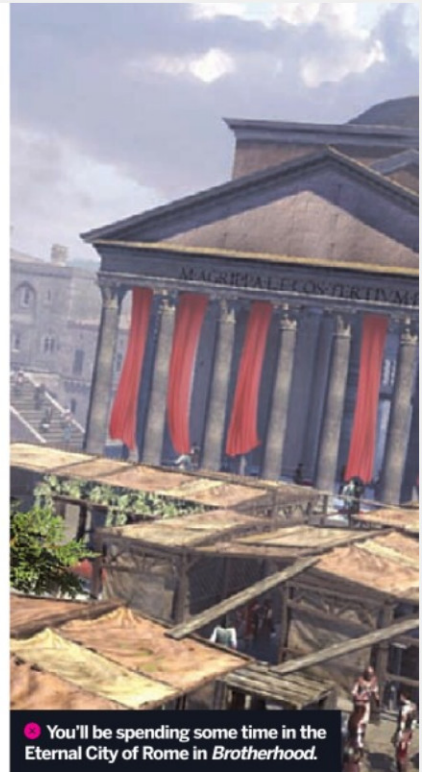
If you want to keep up with **Twisted Metal** development or David Jaffe's various musings on life then check out www.eatsleepplay.biz

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- All-new *Twisted Metal* with elements of the old *Twisted Metal*. It will be very 'twisted'.
- Online modes so far look insane and provide plenty of objectives.
- David Jaffe is at the helm, ensuring that the series' staples survive.
- Being touted as the 'best *Twisted Metal* game ever made' and that's exciting.

READ ME

A classic game is being reborn and by the team that created the original. Drive around, blow stuff up and cause absolute carnage throughout.



You'll be spending some time in the Eternal City of Rome in *Brotherhood*.

RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER

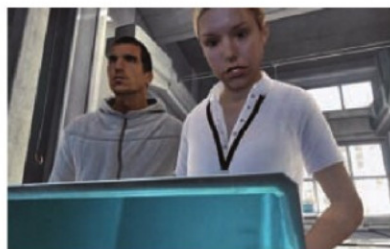
Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood

Play, create, sha...
STAB! STAB! STAB!

DESMOND'S TALE

No, not the barbershop comedy

THERE IS STILL a very big chance there will be an *Assassin's Creed III* – we'd go so far as to say it's 'nailed on' – but for now we have to make do with *Brotherhood*. It's good, then, that it seems to be a fully fledged AC title and one continuing the epic tale of Ezio and chums, with Desmond still in control of the assassin. Why the future types feel the need to stay in the life of the ex-nobleman we do not know, but the mystery of the tale is sure to be explained throughout the game. It's something else to look forward to.



Assassin's Creed II finished on what many would call 'an odd note'. (SPOILERS) After having a fistfight with the Pope, lead character Ezio encountered a hologram being that went on to explain some convoluted nonsense about ancient civilisations *directly to the player* (END SPOILERS). As a result of this, we were sure the next game in the series would pick up with another ancestral story, another era and another few cities to leap about in. We were wrong, though the city does flit over to Rome. It seems the next step in the story is to revisit Ezio and his chums, like Leonardo Da Vinci, as he sets up his own assassin's guild in the immediate aftermath of *Assassin's Creed II*. Call it a spin-off all you want, but this could be the step-up that knocks the series above the 90% threshold.

But why? Well, what held ACII back from utter greatness (as opposed to the standard brilliance it achieved) was its bloated nature, poor combat and lack of variation. Already we've seen this is unlikely to be repeated in *Brotherhood*.

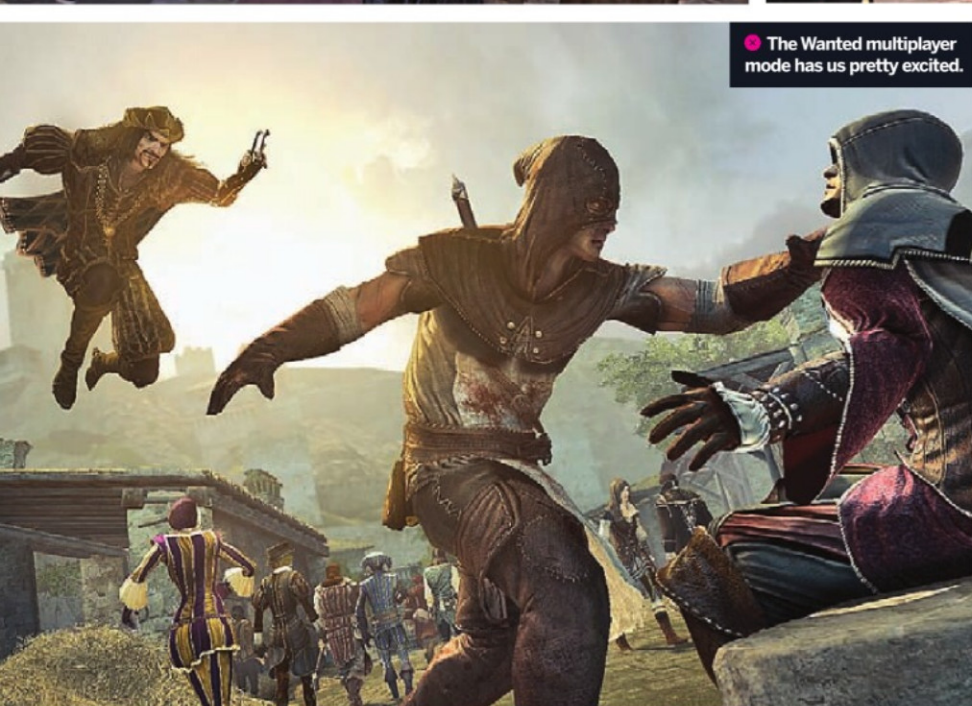
Ezio controls a band of assassins he hires as the game progresses, and each can be involved in his day-to-day assassinating as the player sees fit – a tap of one button will have one of your chaps acting as a distraction, the tap of another has a couple of your blokes offing some pesky guards. It opens the game up to far more technical and strategic outcomes and, as such, fills us with anticipation. We've also been made aware that the combat has been refined to make it more proactive – no longer will enemies sit back and wait to attack one at a time, with battles rewarding the aggressive approach as much as the cowardly 'counter-hit-repeat' method. These are the kind of refinements on a formula that pique our interest, but what is the game doing to really make us sit up and take notice?

Why, online multiplayer of course.

From what we know, up to eight players can take part – though this is liable to change when other game modes are announced. Still, the mode we saw, called Wanted, sees players tasked with killing a target. This target is another player, chosen at random. The thing is, the target player is trying to kill someone else, and their target has a target and so on. Paranoia and fear are two big elements in online gaming, if the recent examples of *Brotherhood* and *Kane & Lynch 2* are anything to go by. For you see, you and other players can still adopt the techniques you would in single-player; hiding in plain sight, sitting on a bench looking nonchalant, leaping silently from a rooftop into a bale of hay – it's all present and correct. But transposing the

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- ◻ Tweaks, refinements and additions to potentially make this a truly great spin-off.
- ◻ It's apparently got enough going for it to be a true sequel.
- ◻ Stabbing your mate in the face after hiding from him for ages: funny.
- ◻ The continuing tale of Ezio may become even more confusing, but it may be fun to see.



● The Wanted multiplayer mode has us pretty excited.

● Combat will be improved, with enemies now more likely to attack in numbers rather than one at a time.



● You can have one of your assassins create a distraction while you move in for the kill.

skills learned in the main game and pitting them against real people is something that honestly, genuinely and absolutely could be bloody brilliant.

In a short amount of time we've gone from confusion, through cynicism and onto a fair amount of optimism for this AC spin-off. It may have come out of pretty much nowhere, but that doesn't mean it should be ignored. With the fine-tuning of the main game and the addition of a robust and – rather importantly – interesting multiplayer portion this is looking to be one of the better spin-offs in the gaming world. You could say it's almost as if *Brotherhood* has snuck up behind to take us all by surprise. But that would be an awful analogy so we won't say that.

Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood is being developed by Ubisoft Montreal. Visit <http://assassinscreed.uk.ubi.com> for more details.

READ ME

Moving away from the locations of *Assassin's Creed II*, *Brotherhood* will take place in Rome, San Donato and Florence – with more locales likely to be announced.



● The assassinations are just as graphic as in *Assassin's Creed II*.

PREVIEW



● We didn't see anyone get stabbed up the nose, but it could happen.



● This guy's your main buddy in 'Nam. He's seen *The Deer Hunter* way too many times.



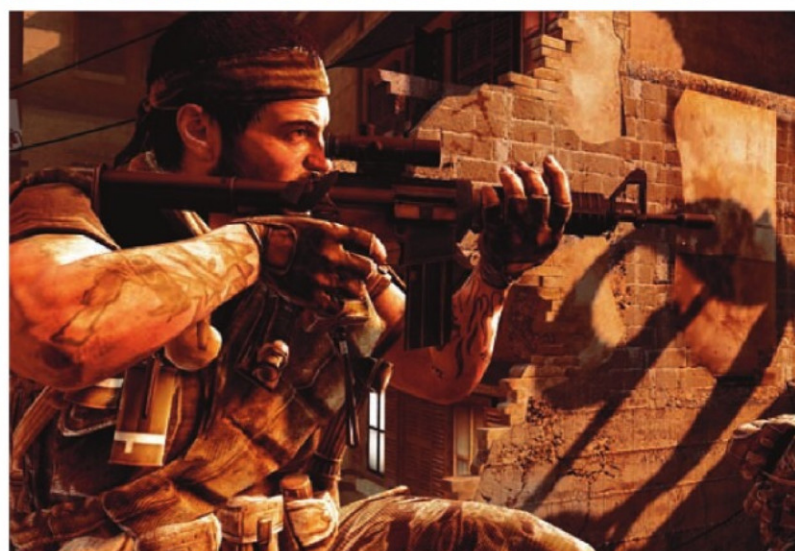
PRIVATE PLOT

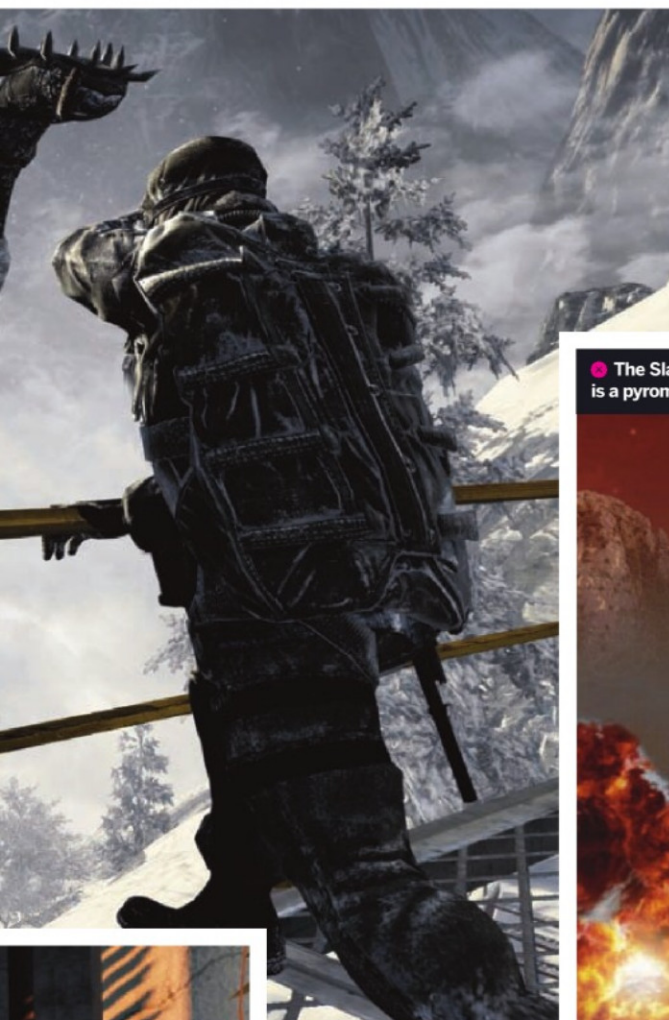
Access to story details denied

GETTING DETAILS OF *Black Ops*' story out of the Treyarch guys is hard work because they don't want to spoil anything, but we did manage to squeeze a few hints out of them. The story will span "a large window of time" and we'd assume that this window would be roughly aligned with the Cold War period and that, depending on your interpretation, took place between 1945 and 1991. Treyarch did also specifically mention how the style of warfare varied during different periods within the Vietnam War, suggesting scenarios from the early stages of the war would appear.



● The bit where you breach in through this window plays out in glorious slo-mo.





● That 'SOG' tattoo is his ID. He can get in anywhere with it.



● You come to this facility looking for a Russian general who's been doing very bad things.

● The Slaughterhouse mission is a pyromaniac's wet dream.



RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER

Call Of Duty: Black Ops

If anyone asks any questions, deny everything

You'd think that black operations, also known as deniable, hidden or secret operations, would be very covert and fairly subtle, wouldn't you? That's what it suggests to us. And in the real world, that's pretty much what they're all about. But seeing *Call Of Duty: Black Ops* in action and talking to Treyarch about the game, you get a different idea of what sets black operations apart from other operations. With this game, it's not so much about the covertness. In both the levels we saw the operations depicted were very loud, very in the open and generally just quite noticeable and presumably pretty hard to deny. Treyarch has chosen to make a game about black operations not in order to accurately portray history or to simulate realistic action, but to take full advantage of the fact that the guys taking part could request and do pretty much anything they wanted.

So, for example, in the mission 'WMD', the Studies and Operations Group unit you're embedded with (the main playable character himself is CIA, not SOG) has requested an SR-71 Blackbird recon plane, at the time (1968) a brand-new,

cutting-edge piece of technology. You actually get to play as two other characters briefly at the start of the mission – the pilot, which involves holding **R2** then pulling back on the left stick, and the recon systems officer, whose job it is to guide the squad on the ground by pointing and clicking on an aerial view of the operation area. There's not a huge amount of depth to either of these two roles, but it certainly seems a great, interactive way of setting the scene before transferring you to the boots of the main playable character.

The first thing you'll notice is that you're armed with a crossbow. Now, the only crossbows officially issued to US military personnel shoot grapple hooks, but SOG is 100 per cent unofficial, so if it wants crossbows that shoot lethal ammunition, including exploding bolts, it gets them. The regular darts allow for stealth, which is sometimes an option, never a requirement,

and the explosive bolts are good, old-fashioned, excessive fun. Your other weapon is an AUG assault rifle, which is interesting because officially its manufacturer, Steyr, hadn't even started designing it in 1968, never mind put it into production. It first entered service in 1978, so we'll have to assume it's a very early prototype that only an elite organisation such as SOG would have access to. That doesn't really explain how so many of the Russian Spetsnaz troops you're up against are carrying SPAS-12 shotguns, which weren't produced until 1979 but let's just say Treyarch isn't pitching this one at a pedantic audience and leave it at that.

Another power the SOG was supposedly able to wield was first priority on requests for assistance, as we saw demonstrated during the 'Slaughterhouse' mission. Your squad encounters a heavily outnumbered regular unit making desperate pleas for air support that

are denied again and again by an attack helicopter unit busy covering another sector nearby. But as soon as one of your SOG buddies (you're again playing as an embedded CIA agent in this mission, but a different one) gets on the radio they take notice immediately. You then get to designate targets for them in the buildings up ahead and before long, your allies aren't so outnumbered.

Treyarch wants you to be continually asking yourself 'what next?' and 'now what?' throughout *Black Ops*' single-player campaign and looks well on the way to achieving that objective from the two levels we saw. The historical accuracy is very loose (and openly so), but the focus on nonstop, over-the-top action is perhaps the tightest it's ever been in any other game in the *Call Of Duty* series.

Call Of Duty: Black Ops is being developed by Treyarch. Visit www.treyarch.com for more details.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Relentless, excessive, spectacular violence. It's what we love.
- Edging away from realism to more overtly fantastical territory.
- Treyarch definitely seems to be closing in on Infinity Ward.
- Includes a wide variety of exciting and interesting scenarios.

READ ME

Treyarch told us that, according to US military protocol, SOG ops had the authority to commandeer any vehicle in the field on the spot, even a general's personal jeep.

MANY HANDS

Advanced scouting network



TO PUT TOGETHER the new stats that make up the Personality+ system EA needed 1,700 scouts, editors and reviewers from around the world. They then had to decide on 36 attributes and 57 traits per player to help form their individual playing style for the game.

BODY BEAUTIFUL

All creatures great and small



EA IS ALSO promising a little more variety from its body types this year. While the likes of Peter Crouch already tower above Jermain Defoe, you should see a greater range of players on the field, further helping to distinguish them from each other.

RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER

FIFA 11

It's not about looks, it's about personality

Finding ways of improving and building on *FIFA* in the last couple of years must have been difficult. Great strides have been made since *FIFA 08* and right now it's difficult to think of any substantial changes to the licence that would really improve it in a dramatic way. What needs changing or updating are just smaller game features that sometimes drag you out of the experience. The latest news on *FIFA 11* would suggest that EA Sports agrees with us.

The 'big' new feature being touted is called Personality+ and it promises to make players feel much more distinct from one another, particularly once you reach the upper echelons of football's elite. Hopefully this will mean that player attributes will be better reflected on the football pitch

as players with higher stats in areas such as passing and power will see significant advantages in those areas. It should equally mean situations such as set pieces might better reflect the strengths and weaknesses of players involved.

It's a tricky balance, though, and even tougher to implement right through the core of the game rather than just to the stars like Rooney, Kaka or Iniesta. The real trick we hope will be in mastering these abilities rather than just using them. The great depth of the *FIFA* games recently has been its real strength, peeling back the layers to reveal more and more excellent gameplay, drawing on the best elements of the sport.

EA Canada remains the developer of the *FIFA* franchise. You can find out more at fifa.easports.com

SAFE PAIR OF HANDS

Keepin' you in the game



PERSONALITY+ GOES MUCH further than just the outfield players. Goalkeepers have tended to be very generic in the past, but these new traits and statistics mean that a 'keeper's ability as a shot-stopper, his sharp reflexes or strength in claiming crosses will be reflected in game.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Better visuals than ever as the *FIFA* franchise continues to push the hardware.
- More variety of player types and behaviours that should reflect their real counterparts.
- More accurate passing that reflects your skill with the pad as well as your players' abilities.
- Promising to be better than the best football game ever made, which is nice.

PASS PERFECTION

Pinpoint passing



PRO PASSING IS the last of the new features revealed so far, promising greater control of passing accuracy, allowing for each players' individual passing ability, the pressure they are under and the difficulty of the pass being made. Could be a good move.

HANDS-ON



There's still plenty of time for DICE to iron out any issues.

RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER

Medal Of Honor

Hands-on with EA's modern warfare

While the single-player campaign of *Medal Of Honor* may raise questions about setting a game in a war that is still going on and claiming lives every day, it's multiplayer mode somewhat circumnavigates that sticky issue by having no story, characters or events. It is purely fantasy and resembles *Call Of Duty's* online Middle Eastern levels. So you'll be pleased to know we're okay with it.

Anyway we got a chance to get hands-on with *Medal Of Honor's* online beta, which started officially on 21 June. We played a co-op map against bots, where ten of us had to capture several Taliban-held points on a map, culminating with the capture and bombing of a large building. It's exactly the kind of team-based gameplay that DICE, maker of *Battlefield*, excels at producing as proven in *Bad Company 2*.

The enemy AI was pretty smart and they provided a serious challenge to those well-versed in *Modern Warfare*. Level design was up to scratch, too, with the level providing a good balance between defensive points and flanking

opportunities for the team that worked together. The loadout screen was a nice addition, as it enabled you to first of all pick one of three classes – Sniper, Rifleman and Special Ops, choose perks, weapons and then customise parts on the weapons.

It's difficult to draw too many conclusions from our playtest but it seems solid enough. In its current form, *Medal Of Honor's* online beta lacks the polish of *Modern Warfare* online but that's to be expected. The game does need some serious tweaking in terms of respawn points – we found ourselves getting spawn-killed (is that an accepted term?) over and over again, simply because we appeared slap-bang in the middle of a firefight.

But thanks to the fact this is still a beta, DICE has plenty of time between now and *Medal Of Honor's* October release to fix any issues and come back at us with another superbly polished and balanced multiplayer mode.

Medal Of Honor is jointly developed by EA LA and DICE. There are plenty of development updates to be found at www.medalofhonor.com

The multiplayer avoids controversy by doing away with story and characters.



The setting is similar to *Call Of Duty's* Middle Eastern levels.



FRONTLINE AND CENTRE

PS2 classic is making a return



JUST IN CASE you didn't hear, we thought we would remind you that the PS3 is getting an exclusive special edition of *Medal Of Honor* this October that will include an HD remake of the first PS2 game in the series, *Medal Of Honor: Frontline*. It was so good back in the day that **Play** gave it 98% (Issue 90). Were we mad or was it really that good? We'll find out again for sure in a few months.



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Multiplayer modes made by one of the best online gaming developers around.
- Excellent AI that should offer even the most seasoned campaigner a challenge.
- Real-world settings that have been informed by people actually on the ground.
- Unlockable beards so you don't have an exposed chin during multiplayer matches.

READ ME

DICE is also working on some Vietnam-based DLC for *Battlefield: Bad Company 2* to spoil Activision's Vietnam-heavy *Call Of Duty: Black Ops*.

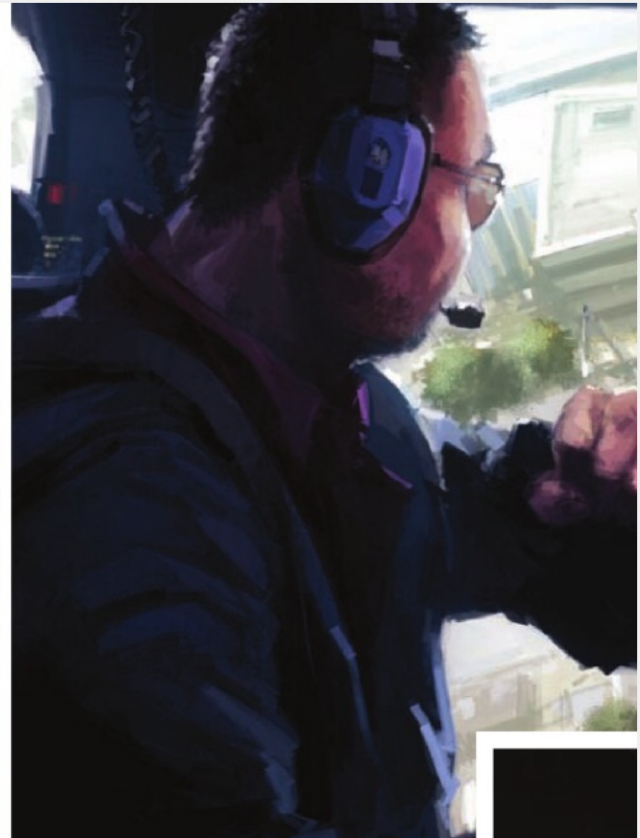


Features solid team-based combat.

PREVIEW



120 real-life, fully destructible cars are available to Shift into.



Shifting into the burning car: a stupid idea.



RELEASE DATE: WINTER 2010

Driver: San Francisco

A Quantum Leap for the series

The mere mention of a *Driver* game is enough to get precisely one of two reactions from a person: if they're immediately reminded of the original *Driver* game from 1999 on PSone they will think of happiness, of a world like no other they'd seen before, wonderful driving physics and some brutal (but loveable) difficulty. If their memories fall on more recent times, however, they are likely to vomit out of fear or sheer disgust at

(home console) existence is aiming for the former over the latter. And from what we were able to play of the game in both single and multiplayer, it's easy to see this should avoid repeating the mistakes of the last couple of entries to the series.

It would be easy to go into all the details of driving, how the handling feels and what the atmosphere of San Francisco is like in the game, but these points simply have to take a back seat. Why? Shift. It's a feature

It's easy to see that *Driver: San Francisco* should avoid repeating the mistakes of the last couple of entries to the series

the thought of *Driver 3* and *Driver: Parallel Lines*, both of which weren't received all too well at Play Towers (71% and 58%, respectively). It's safe to say that Ubisoft Reflections, home of the series throughout its entire

Reflections has brought into the game to – as the developer says – make it a more unique experience. But what exactly is Shift? Bear with us as we try to explain: you play as Tanner, the main character of the first

three games. At some point near the beginning of the game he is involved in a serious incident that leaves him in a coma – something the player is aware of but Tanner isn't. For reasons not yet explained to us, this gives Tanner the ability, with the press of \otimes , to leave his body, float out of the car above the city, centre a targeting reticule on another vehicle and with another press of \otimes inhabit that vehicle. But they don't just occupy the car; Tanner actually inhabits the consciousness of the person driving it. Now, we may have lost you by this point and that's more than understandable – why Reflections seems keen to put an element of *Quantum Leap* in *Driver: San Francisco* we do not know. But still, bear with us for one simple reason – it works. The reasoning behind it may be confusing, even verging on a bit odd, but there's no denying this is a quick, simple and functional >





❖ This image should be called 'Essence of Driver'. Really, it should.



❖ This looks a little enhanced to what we saw, but it doesn't look much different to this.



❖ Ah, the Shelby GT500. We (don't) know you well.



Q&A Martin Edmondson

Founder, Ubisoft Reflections

We spoke to Reflections' founder and creative director (as well as creator of the original *Driver*), Martin Edmondson, about *Driver: San Francisco*.

How did the idea for Shift come about?

The Shift feature initially was a function rather than a story element – the initial idea, or the best way to imagine it, was 'Google Earth Live'... The original inspiration was a Google Earth type of thing, but running live, and running all of the traffic – that was where the idea came from.

What kind of feel are you going for with Shift? It comes across as quite Quantum Leap/sci-fi.

We've tried very hard to stay away from sci-fi as such, because obviously you could justify this mechanic in any number of ways. It could be a surreal thing, it could be a real mind-warping helmet thing or virtual reality or whatever, but what is absolutely key for us is that *Driver* is rooted in reality, or at least Hollywood car chase reality, and always has been. So we wanted the Shift ability to be really integrated deeply into the story and for that story to be rooted in reality as I said.

What are the consequences for Shifting into the lives of other people?

You can have some fun with it – if you crash into a cop, then he's chasing you. If you then Shift out then that person is now being chased by a cop, but you can just go and Shift to another car and watch all that

carry on, or even join the chase.

Is there a formula to get the driving 'right'? Is it a feeling, or something more intuitive?

I'd describe the driving as intuitive because it runs through a physics engine, but we have certain helpers in there. From our point of view in terms of getting it right it's something of a black art, there's no set rule that we follow. It's a realistic model using extremely accurate physics, but then we overlay some subtle helpers. To handle a real car at the limit – especially a mid-engine car – is very difficult for anyone. And then to take away all of your sensory stuff about loads and G-forces and expect someone to control it just with a PS3 pad, it's nigh-on impossible. So we overlay things just to make it a bit easier, but the effect we've always been after is that the player feels like they have mastered real handling.

Would you put the infamous, opening garage from the first Driver in the new one via DLC?

The garage may or may not be in.

Is the garage already in?

[Laughing] I can't tell you if the garage is or isn't already in.



PREVIEW



Surprisingly, this is artwork and not a screenshot.



Dodge Ram. Clue's in the name.



> method to make your way around the game world, to drive all of the 120 licensed cars on offer and to do a lot more things we'll get into right about... now.

The simple act of switching cars can be used for many different reasons – like switching from a Dodge Neon to a Pagani Zonda, for example. But more interesting aspects of Shifting were explained to us: see a police chase going on, Shift into one of the cop cars and you're immediately in a mission. Shift out if you want to do something else, or – probably our favourite thing – Shift to a vehicle on the other side of the road ahead of the car being chased, manoeuvre it into position and crash head-on into the target, before switching back to the cop car and finishing the chase. The possibilities for this mechanic reach much further than we expected them to on first hearing about it, and it's clear it isn't just an afterthought in any way.

Away from something we actually won't call a gimmick (shock!) we have what we like to call 'the rest of the game'. Reflections is keen to point out this is a game that goes back to the roots of the original – you

vehicles, especially from the inside views. And oh, the engine noise. Ohhhh, the engine noise. It seems as if *Driver: San Francisco* is an odd combination – it's not a reboot, it is a straight, canonical sequel to *Driver 3*, it has updated technology

See a police chase going on, Shift into one of the cop cars and you're immediately in a mission

cannot get out of your car and walk around, and it is entirely focused on the driving physics and mechanics. From our playing time both solo and against others it was clear to see there is a definite *feel* to the driving which did remind us quite a lot of the original game's mechanics. Heavy cars, all too eager to powerslide around every corner you could think to put in front of them but never so eager as to ruin your fun. Fast-paced chases – dare we say it, of the Hollywood kind – and some great-looking

but the ethos of the first game, the storyline and characters reappear from the last game but the celebrities are gone. It's far more interesting and fun to play than we ever expected it to be, with all the negative connotations coming along with the *Driver* series these days, and it's something we're looking forward to seeing more of in the coming months.

Driver: San Francisco is being developed by Ubisoft Reflections. The official site isn't up at the time of writing, so check ubi.com for details.



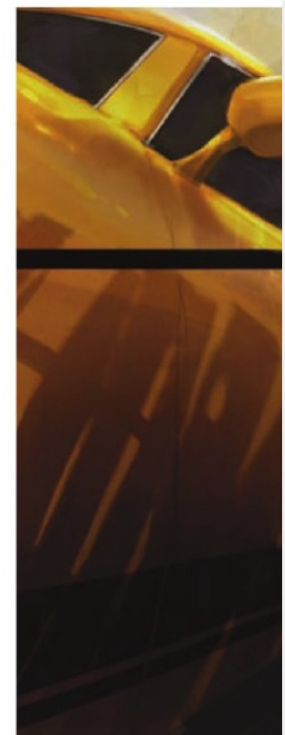
Cars feel suitably meaty and heavy – powerslide fun.



MULTI[CAR]BALL!

So what's it like against other people?

WE WERE ONLY able to play one mode online, which saw four cars battling it out to stay in the slipstream of an AI-controlled Delorean. Staying in its wake accumulated points, the first to a hundred winning the round. Simple, yet at the same time captivating, with much in the way of strategic Shifting – do you want a fast, light car, or a slower, stronger automobile? Or a Dodge Neon? Balancing strategy between keeping up with the lead car, picking up points and fending off other players was certainly a lot of fun, and it puts the other eight online modes – whatever they may be – in good stead.



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Returning to the roots of the *Driver* series is a great approach.
- Reflections has been working on it since 2006, so it's had time to be crafted with care.
- The Shift mechanic sounds odd written down, but actually works very well.
- Multiplayer offers a fun, fresh experience for online play.

READ ME

The first *Driver* game is seen by some as a *GTA III*-like game, even though it came out well before Rockstar's masterpiece. Hmm.



● We could pretend to know what this car is. We don't.



● Jones, Tanner's partner, returns for another run in the passenger seat.



UPDATE

RELEASE DATE: TBC 2011

● This year's first *Call Of Duty* casualty?

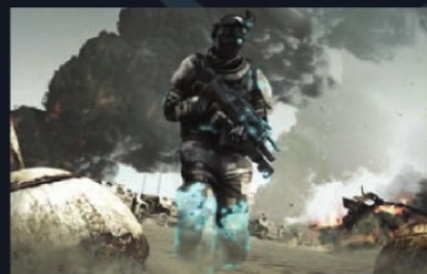
Ghost Recon: Future Soldier

Hiding in the dark for a little while longer

While it gives us no joy to say so, it seems that *Ghost Recon: Future Soldier* is the first game of 2010 to be delayed for fear of clashing with the might of *Call Of Duty* and other big hitters at the end of the year. Ubisoft recently announced that the game was being pushed into 2011 to avoid the congestion typical of the end of the year, but there's a silver lining to most clouds and the delay cloud is about as shiny as they come.

We don't doubt that the release of *Splinter Cell: Conviction* on Xbox 360 earlier this year will have convinced Ubisoft that it can still make good money if it avoids the madness that goes on between September and December each year. Clearing a little room for itself in 2011 also means it will have more development time and that means more time to polish any rough edges. That's good news for us.

From what we understand the nuts and bolts of *Ghost Recon* are in place already. Inspired by the US Future Soldier



programme and the amazing technology that is being tested to advance warfare, Ubisoft has got an interesting new template for the series. We're expecting something more focused and action orientated than we've seen before, although last issue the game's producer said it wouldn't be a shooting gallery.

What it will be, as *Ghost Recon* always has been, is a test of stealth and tactics that will put you in control of cutting-edge tech and the most advanced weapons you're likely to see in a realistic shooter.

As ever Ubisoft Paris is developing *Ghost Recon* and you can find out more from its website ghostrecon.uk.ubi.com

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Ridiculous new tech and weapons that will bring you closer to the action.
- The same great third-person-shooting game that has always been a joy.
- Fancy robots and drones that you can send into hotspots before the fight.
- Tom Clancy games seem to be on the up and up. This could be the latest.



● We're looking forward to seeing what Ubisoft can do with *Future Soldier*.

RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER

Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit

In Pursuit of greatness

We have to admit we're not at all surprised. Ever since it was revealed that Criterion would be working on the new *Need For Speed* game, we knew it was going to be like this. And that is no bad thing. The creator of the fantastic *Burnout* series is taking one of EA's flagship titles back to its roots, bringing back the police chases and high-speed ridiculousness with *Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit*.

While recent entries to the *NFS* series have been more focused on the 'street' ethos or – in the case of *Shift* – a more simulation-edged experience, *Hot Pursuit* takes the series back to the balls-out chases between the police and racers, with players able to take on either role online and off. As well as a fully fledged single-player career mode, where players can explore the open world of Seacrest County, Criterion is making a big push with the online components of the game.

A system called Autolog backs up these improved online elements, and though we don't know how it works outside the usual PR gumph, it sounds like it could be a welcome addition. It allows players to instantly

compare many different kinds of data with friends – such as what races or challenges they've finished – and keeps you up to date by delivering challenges based around how your friends are performing. It's hard to get too thrilled, but it does sound like it will serve a purpose.

Throughout the game players will be able to earn 'bounty', which they will be able to spend on upgrades like new policey-weapons or evasion techniques for the team on the other side of the law. The bounty system will likely stretch to cover the purchasing of new cars, and the super-mobiles on show in *Hot Pursuit* are likely to delight: Pagani Zonda, for example, is a suitably ridiculous car.

We know Criterion is a proven developer, but its last *Burnout* title, *Paradise*, split fans because of its open-world structure. With *Hot Pursuit* following this template we're having to remain cautious. Safe to say, though, we are suitably pumped about the reins being handed to the Brits (conveniently ignoring *Shift*) for this instalment of *Need For Speed*.

Hot Pursuit is being developed by Criterion, the developer famed for the *Burnout* series, visit www.needforspeed.com for the latest updates.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Criterion knows how to make an exciting racer.
- A big focus on online play and competition.
- An advanced, bonus-based upgrade system.
- A return to *NFS*'s cat-and-mouse racing roots.

READ ME

The *Need For Speed* series has been going for 16 years over 14 iterations, but this is the first time in a while we've been excited by a new *NFS* release.



● We've never been chased by police cars that look as cool as this, er sorry... we mean we've never been chased by police cars.



● You'll have to use all those moves you learned in *Burnout* to evade arrest.



BURN ROBBER

Choose your side of the thin blue line

IN *HOT PURSUIT* you get to pick which side you're on – become a notorious racer or efficient law enforcer. By escaping from police chases or taking down known felons you can earn yourself bonuses. While we're not entirely sure what form these rewards will take at the moment we suspect it will be along the lines of faster cars for the racers and the ability to call in air support for the cops.

UPDATE



● You probably don't need us to tell you this but *Gran Turismo 5* looks absolutely stunning.



● It's finally been given a date. But only in the US at the moment.



● It's been a long time coming but it certainly looks like it's going to be worth it.



NUMBER CRUNCHING

A brief glimpse of what GT5 offers

LET'S LOOK AT a batch of figures that will make you salivate about *GT5*: it has more than 1,000 cars, with around 200 of them 'premium'; more than 20 tracks offering around 70 variations; custom soundtracks; the ability to upload and share both photos and videos; split-screen multiplayer as well as online; transferable vehicles from *GTPSP* and *Prologue*; accurately modelled NASCAR pit crews; the ability to roll your car (finally!); 'track days' you can set up online; lounges for you and fellow racers; GT TV streaming video footage – the list goes on. And on.

RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER

Gran Turismo 5

We can honestly say 'the wait is almost over' now

It probably makes it all the more painful that we've seen so much of *Gran Turismo 5* over the last four or five years. Not because it looks bad, not because we're disappointed – no, this is quite the opposite. Seeing a game that constantly looks so very stunning, that seems to look better every time it's shown, that adds so much to the experience with each appearance – it's painful because we want it now.

But for something to consistently look this good over a period of years it's a wait we're willing – if not happy – to take. When you're told the game has full

stereoscopic 3D support on top of all the other gubbins, that's when you're reminded why, as a certain advert says, "good things come to those who wait". And we now know America only has to wait until 2 November – though we don't know how long us poor Europeans have to wait.

With all the lists of cars, tracks and features, it's easy to forget that there's a bloody good driving game under all those tons of content and all that extra sheen. It may be a bit overwhelming – even a bit scary – how committed Kazunori Yamauchi is to this project, but this obsession looks like it will pay

off big time when *Gran Turismo 5* finally (eventually) comes out. Hopefully once it's done he can go ride a bike, or something else non-car related.

We're caught up in the hype and we may be prone to hyperbole as a result, but *Gran Turismo 5* looks very much like it could be the definitive racing game. At least for the five or six years it takes to make *GT6* – after all, Polyphony is slacking a bit to only perfectly model 200 cars. Lazy beggars.

Polyphony Digital continues to be the mind and hand behind the *Gran Turismo* series. You can find out more at www.gran-turismo.com

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- *Gran Turismo 5* has been several years in the making, but the time spent is beginning to pay off in many ways.
- Graphically this is the best game we've ever seen running on the PlayStation 3. We can't wait to see the finished version.
- A huge number of incredibly detailed and polished cars to choose from. More than 1,000 in total with 200 'premium' cars.
- Features the same great *Gran Turismo* handling and dramatic racing that have made the series great and made this game so sought-after.

READ ME

Everyone is going a little bit bonkers about how awesome the *Top Gear* test track looks in *Gran Turismo 5* and who are we to argue. It's amazing.

PREVIEW



RELEASE DATE: FEBRUARY 2011

Homefront

Home sweet home sweet Jeez! What happened here?

Refer to similarities between the game they're working on and a well-known existing game when meeting a developer and you'll commonly get a pretty thorny response. "Yes, there are similarities between our project and *that* game," they'll say. "And of course we respect what *that* developer has achieved there. But we feel our game is unique because of this, that and the other feature, and offers a superior

Bring up *Half-Life 2*, and you'll be met with a broad grin

experience because of blah blah, yadda yadda and like... whatever."

No hard-working, creative person likes to hear that the fruit of their endeavour is just Game A crossed with Game B, Game C with a twist or, worse still, a carbon copy of Game D.

With any member of the team behind *Homefront*, though, it depends what game you offer up comparisons with. Mention *Call Of Duty* and, while they'll all be far too polite to roll their eyes at you, that's the kind of vibe you'll get. The sections in *Modern Warfare 2* where you're defending leafy American suburbs from a Russian invasion are certainly echoed by

Homefront's setting, which sees the US occupied by North Korean forces after a highly unlikely but not totally ludicrous series of events, and yes, it's an FPS, too, but the similarities pretty much end there. The key differences are that *Homefront* has an occupation, as opposed to an invasion, as its backdrop, and that the main character and his allies are not professional, trained soldiers – they're mostly just regular folk who've taken up arms and joined

a resistance movement. And these points bring us to a well-known game

that Kaos and THQ are only too glad to have *Homefront* compared to – *Half-Life 2*.

Yup, bring up *Half-Life 2*, and you'll be met with a broad grin and open admission that, yes, Valve's masterpiece is being used as a model in the development of *Homefront*. There are no cut-scenes, the main character never speaks and characterisation and atmosphere are two of the highest development priorities. Essentially, it's a non-sci-fi *Half-Life 2*, and that's a flattering comparison, not a lazy one.

There are differences, of course. The most obvious one being that the enemies in *Homefront* are all human

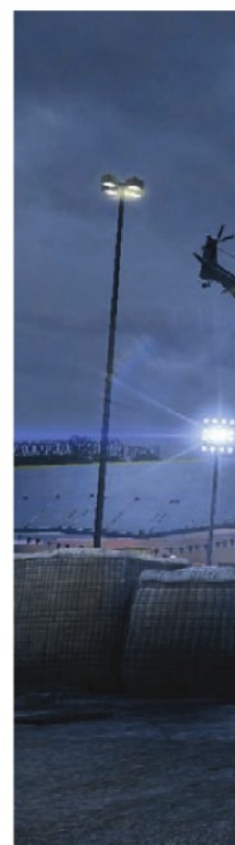
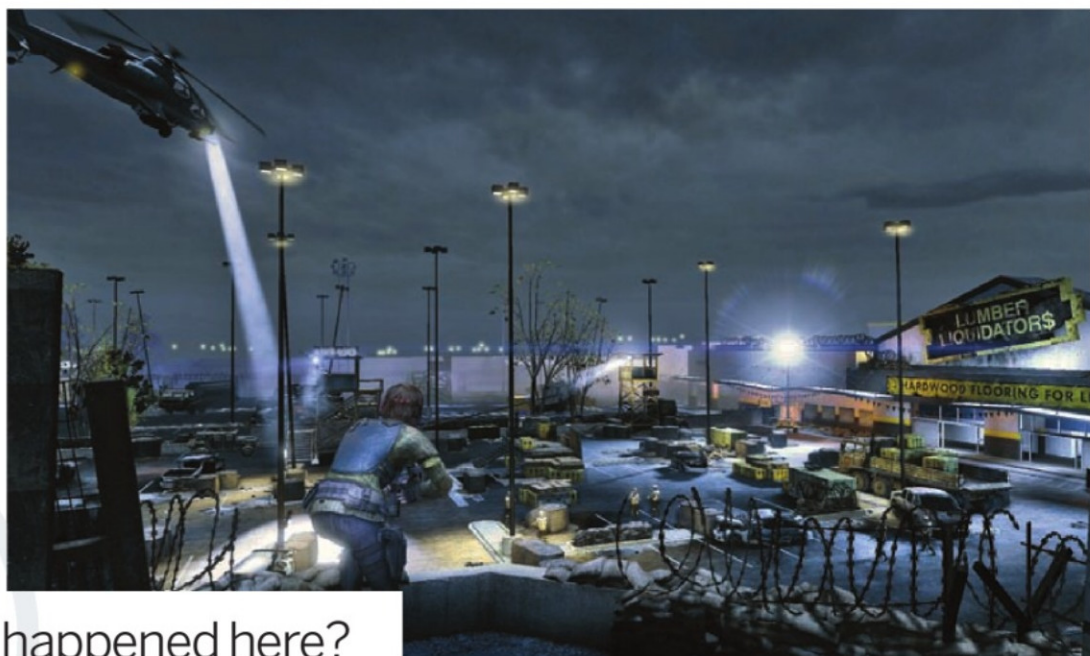
beings not aliens or alien/human hybrids. Kaos wants the KPA (Korean People's Army) as a whole to have a similarly oppressive, brutal feel to the Combine, but also wants to keep reminding the player that despite their loyalty to a cruel regime the KPA soldiers are people, too. At one point during the demo we saw – a moment the developer continually referred back to during interviews – a KPA squad is hit by a white phosphorous bomb, setting several of them on fire. One of your squad mates implores you to shoot them to "put them out of their misery", while another instead suggests that you "let the bastards cook". Your decision here has no plot or gameplay consequences – there's no karma-o-meter swinging one way or another depending on what you do – the idea is simply to make you think about what's happening in different ways, and to remind you *Homefront* is more than just a shooting gallery.

Similarly, we were told of a scene where you come upon another resistance group that has captured a handful of KPA troopers and is torturing them. Again there's no 'Do you join in? YES/NO' pop-up window. It's simply hoped that scenarios like this will enhance your level of involvement in the game's plot by challenging you to contemplate the

humanity of your enemy, your allies and yourself, as well as to wonder what you'd do if it were your own neighbourhood that were living under such a brutal occupation.

Another major way in which *Homefront* does *not* follow in *Half-Life 2's* footsteps is that there are no puzzles. You don't get a gravity gun or anything like that, and it doesn't use physics in the same way. In fact, such is the emphasis on storytelling that Kaos isn't claiming any unique, standout gameplay features for *Homefront* at all. That's not to say it'll be straightforward run-'n'-gun throughout – for example, we saw one section where you got to order around a remote control combat drone, echoing Kaos's last game, *Frontlines: Fuel Of War* – just that there won't be any gameplay gimmicks thrown in for the sake of a few extra bullet points on the back of the box.

So, by now you're probably wondering how the most powerful nation on Earth has found itself at the mercy of an oppressive regime led not by aliens, but by a small, poor, technologically primitive country. Well, Kaos has gone to a lot of trouble to come up with a detailed back story to the game, even going so far as to recruit a former CIA agent and East Asia expert to advise. But the more





● There's a lot of ambient detail in every location to make them feel as real as possible.



● This white phosphorous explosion was the most dramatic moment in the demo we saw.



● Once a humble flooring wholesaler, Lumber Liquidators becomes a key strategic location.

KOREA PATH

How the west was lost

IN HOMEFRONT, THE US ends up occupied by the New Korean Republic following a chain of events over the next 15 years. We think it's best not to think too much about the logic of all this, but here's what happened...



2012 North Korean leader Kim Jong-il dies after a long illness.



2013 Kim Jong-il's son, Kim Jong-un succeeds his father and successfully unites North and South Korea, forming the New Korean Republic.



2014 Israel launches a strike on an Iranian nuclear facility, sparking a conflict in the Middle East that eventually draws in Russia and most of Europe, so they'll all be too busy to intervene in the NKR's actions later.



2015 Unemployment in the US reaches 30 per cent. This economic strife begins to affect the US military.



2017 Due to political manoeuvring and spending cuts, all US troops deployed in Korea and Japan are redeployed to the US.



2018 The NKR invades Japan, easily overthrowing its government. Korea now has advanced Japanese military technology at its disposal.



2020 Martial law is imposed across the entire United States in an effort to maintain order and quell increasing civil unrest.



2022 The US government faces bankruptcy, even after trading in all its old games for cash at Cex.



2023 As the United States struggles, the New Korean Republic is busy peacefully annexing several other neighbouring Asian countries (but not China), bringing its total standing army force to 20 million personnel.



2024 The NKR launches what appears to be a perfectly innocent GPS satellite into space.



2025 But it turns out the GPS satellite contains a nuclear bomb, which gets detonated over the US causing an EMP effect, frying everything electronic across the nation. The NKR sends cargo ships to the US that are supposedly carrying US nationals evacuated from Korea and Japan, but they're actually full of KPA troops. What sneaks they are!

America has fallen.

PREVIEW



It almost seems like *Fallout 3* at times, only with optimism.



> we heard, the more we had the urge to nitpick. Fact is, no matter how much effort is put into it, this story is always going to seem less plausible than a cross-dimensional alien invasion. But to dismiss it on those grounds would be to miss the point. There are good reasons why Kaos wants to create a world in which locations gamers know as familiar and safe become warzones and, if a few outlandish geo-political projections have to be made in order to get the story there, then so be it. But here's a short version, just so you know...

In 2012 North Korean leader Kim Jong-il dies and is succeeded by his son, Kim Jong-un, who sets about expanding North Korea's influence, first by uniting North and South Korea, then by taking over Japan, and finally by absorbing other neighbouring states into a powerful coalition. In the meantime, the US economy is suffering for

in a terrorist attack, so we're prepared to cut it some slack.

Even if *Homefront*'s back story doesn't make it feel plausible, we're optimistic that the game's own specific narrative itself will. You won't be playing as a one-man army, single-handedly ridding America of the Korean red menace. Your mission is a humble one – you're asked to deliver some fuel from one resistance base to another – and the events of the game take place over a fairly small area during a short space of time. The idea is that you experience the occupation and 'the fight' in as personal and as meaningful a way as possible. Again, it's very *Half-Life 2*.

It's difficult to know how well Kaos is going to pull this off. There's a real enthusiasm surrounding this project alongside a solid understanding of what makes an engaging, involving single-player campaign, but the team has

which is encouraging given that it was still better than we've seen in plenty of finished games.

Single-player might not be such a big deal for some anyway, of course, particularly those already fans of Kaos's work. These guys were behind the acclaimed *Desert Combat* mod for *Battlefield 1942* and then *Frontlines: Fuel Of War* for the PC and 360, so its multiplayer credentials are in no doubt at all. No details of *Homefront*'s multiplayer have been revealed to us yet, though, only promises that it'll be very special and on a large, *Battlefield*-esque scale.

Given how much we always harp on about how *Half-Life 2* did story and characterisation so much better than any other game, and how strange it is that no other games have followed in its footsteps, it'd be rude of us not to applaud when a developer *finally* takes note. Kaos doesn't seem to be just name-dropping *Half-Life 2* either. There is a thoughtful appreciation of what made it such a great game at work; one that we share, and one that we find encouraging. It's not often we get excited by one game drawing such direct inspiration from another, but given that *Half-Life 2* has, in many ways, proven criminally under-influential in the five and a half years since its release, we'll make a special case for *Homefront*.

Homefront is being developed by Kaos Studios. Check the website for more details: www.kaosstudios.com

A world in which locations gamers know as familiar and safe become warzones

a variety of reasons and America loses its standing as the world's most powerful nation. By 2025, the New Korean Federation is in a position to invade and does so using a combination of an EMP attack and 'trojan horse' trickery. It's far-fetched, to say the least, but it's notably less silly than a full-scale Russian invasion sparked by an undercover US agent's involvement

never really made a story-based game before and decent plots and characters in games are very hard to get right, even if they're approached with the right attitude. That side of things is looking a bit cheesy and lacking in subtlety at the moment, but the team were keen to point out that there is a lot of work still to be done on the characters and various details of the setting,

PLAYGROUND BULLIES

Good things never last, especially with the KPA around

THE SCREEN BELOW shows the relatively idyllic surroundings of a suburban resistance base. There's a barbecue on the go, someone just out of shot is milking a goat (we *kid* you not) and a child plays on a swing. But if you're thinking the resistance could be doing a better job of hiding this base then you might be right. The concept art at the bottom appears to show the same location only there's a dead man on the swing instead of a child. Plus there are dead bodies all over the floor and the less said about the fate of the goat, the better.



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- ❑ Moral choices that aren't patronisingly spelled out to you.
- ❑ It may look like it, but it's *not* a *Call Of Duty* clone. Really it's not.
- ❑ John Milius (*Conan The Barbarian*, *Apocalypse Now*) is contributing to the script.
- ❑ Apes *Half-Life 2*, which is a lot easier said than done.

READ ME

The sound made when a KPA trooper gets run over by a heavy vehicle is actually the sound of a Rottweiler chewing ice cubes.



IN-DEPTH



● The resistance has apparently scavenged a lot of its equipment from the US police force.



● Put them out of their misery or let 'em cook? The choice is yours.

● Barbecues are great for your Sims' social lives, and perhaps for giving them food poisoning.



FIRST LOOK

RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER

The Sims 3

One room, no doors. A digital life slowly wastes away...

The Sims series has to be one of gaming's greatest guilty pleasures. Not in the same way as something like *Dynasty Warriors* – no, *The Sims* is actually pretty good – more in the way we always find ourselves enjoying *The Sims* the most when we're being unspeakably cruel to its inhabitants. When you've trapped a 'human being' in a small, empty room and watched gleefully as it wet itself repeatedly, cried over and over again then, finally, starved to death, you've seen a window into your own soul and you may wish you could unsee it.

Here at **Play**, though, we're too far gone to feel bad about something like that, and we fully intend to take out the deep-seated resentments we hold against all of humanity on those poor defenseless folk in *The Sims 3*. There's a new feature called Karma Powers in this one that lets you bless a Sim with good luck or curse one with failure. We're so going to lock a Sim in a room, then hit him with the Get Lucky power, then



laugh as he realises he hasn't got lucky at all. Quite the opposite, in fact! We're chuckling just thinking about it.

You can also create and share things in this one. We don't know exactly what yet, though. You can create pretty much anything on the PC version, but that's the kind of thing that usually gets hamstrung in console ports. Of course, it needn't on the PS3, what with Sony's open attitude to user-generated content, but it probably will. At least just a bit. *The Sims 3* is due to come knocking on the PS3's door this side of Christmas. In the meantime, don't have nightmares (about what goes on inside the heads of the **Play** team).

The Sims 3 is being developed by one of EA's many studios. Check the website for more details: <http://thesims.ea.com>

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- You can dedicate your life to helping digital people to live full happy lives.
- Always a very popular game with the female contingent.
- Or if you so wish you can torture and kill them instead. It's your call.
- It allows you to create the perfect family you never had.



● The love maze also looks pretty cruel, although probably more straightforward than getting a hot, young blonde to love you in real life.

PREVIEW



• Hmm. Probably shouldn't turn around right now.



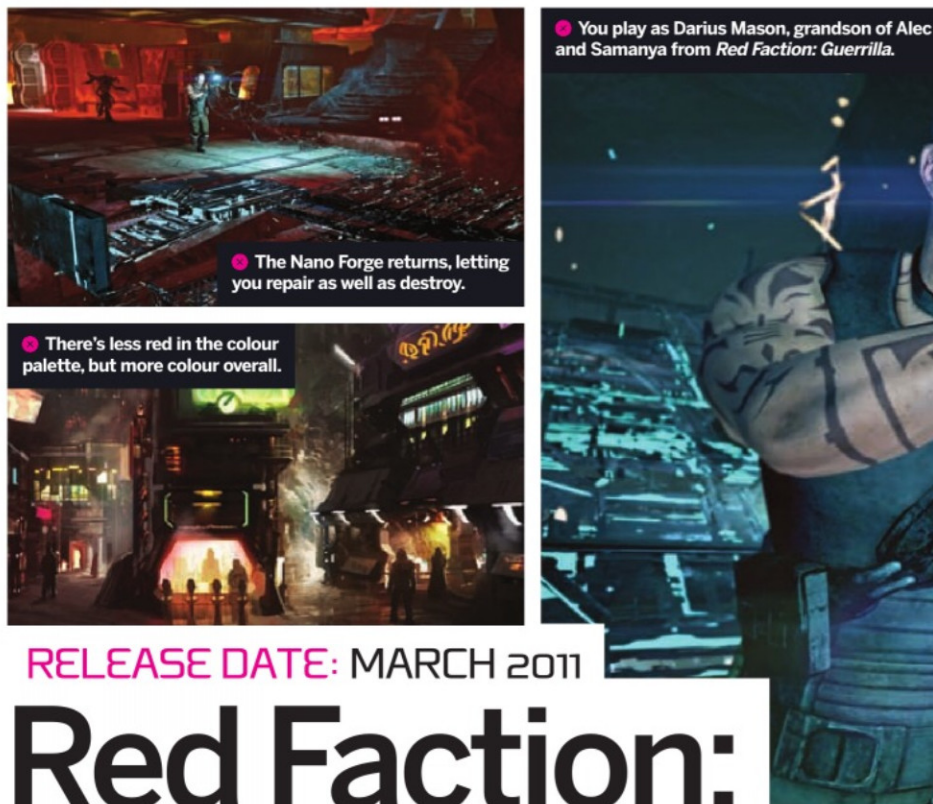
• Drop the gun, bring out the hammer!



• The Nano Forge returns, letting you repair as well as destroy.



• There's less red in the colour palette, but more colour overall.



• You play as Darius Mason, grandson of Alec and Samanya from *Red Faction: Guerrilla*.

RELEASE DATE: MARCH 2011

Red Faction: Armageddon

Don't wanna close my eyes, don't wanna fall to sleep...

The last *Red Faction* title – *Guerrilla* – left us hopeful of a better future.

We were big fans of the game, despite its faults, and saw it as a brilliant jumping-off point for the re-imagined series. So it was with little surprise we were forced to do a double-take when we saw the fourth entry to the franchise – *Armageddon* – was quite literally going underground. The sparse-but-atmospheric vistas of Mars's surface would be no more as the settlers on the red planet have been forced into subterranean dwellings – a fault of dodgy terraforming equipment. But from

what we've seen that doesn't mean we'll have any less of an experience full of character, with the caverns, tunnels and ex-mine shafts coming complete with a life of their own.

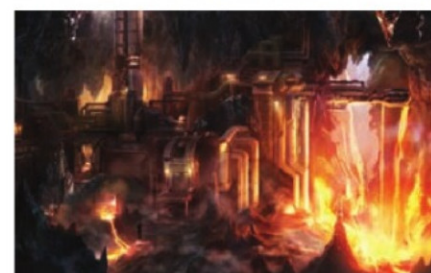
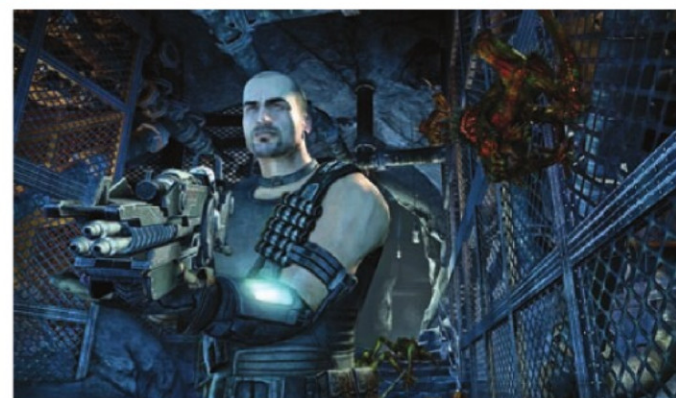
Destruction is still a key element, and seeing as we're yet to have another game that has been able to outdo what *Guerrilla* achieved, we're confident Volition will deliver some smashing nonsense of the highest calibre. Whether it will be Geo-Mod 3.0 or anything similarly silly, we don't know.

But this time around you're not just battering evil EDF types and a few (hundred) buildings – something underground has

been awakened. For the first time in a *Red Faction* game, you will have to take on a bunch of marauding aliens. How this will fit into the storyline we aren't sure, but Volition is hoping it will bring a new kind of feel to the forefront: survival.

So long as this isn't a demolition of all that built *Guerrilla* up to such towering standards in our lofty opinion, we can see *Armageddon* constructing a greater share of the market's real estate for itself. That was a poor attempt at a pun-laden closing paragraph, we're sorry.

Red Faction: Armageddon is being developed by Volition. Check out www.redfaction.com for more details.



MARS ROVER?

Can you free-roam in tunnels?

THERE'S NO WORD just yet if *Armageddon* will be an open-world title, like *Guerrilla*. Our sister magazine, *360*, were smart enough to put this very line of questioning to the game's design lead, David Abzug, who answered: "I'm not really allowed to say. It's something we're still working on... There's going to be a lot of variety in the game."

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- We're big fans of Volition's fun-based output. 'Funput', if you will.
- The aimlessness of *Red Faction: Guerrilla* has been reined in.

- Aliens could well bring an element of horror to proceedings.
- Boom! Kaboom! Kapow! Smash! Bojuddle! Expect plenty of destruction.

READ ME

The *Red Faction* games have been well received throughout **Play's** history, picking up scores of 94%, 89% and 80% respectively.



Shooting from cover has its part to play, but you really want to get in their faces.

RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER

Vanquish

Platinum Games talks exclusively to Play

Has the success of *Bayonetta* given you high hopes for the reception that *Vanquish* will get from gamers?

Atsushi Inaba (executive director): I think that gamers will be able to look at our games and say that we continue to make titles live up to the Platinum Games name.

With its setting and speed do you think that *Vanquish* has a good chance of breaking through to the hardcore FPS players?

Shinji Mikami (director): We are working to make *Vanquish* a game that hardcore gamers will enjoy. I think it is something that they will be able to sink their teeth into time and time again.

You have included some real-world details in *Vanquish*, such as DARPA. Would it be fair to say you're attempting a kind of hyper reality?

Mikami: We wanted to put our main character Sam, and Lt Col Burns on opposite ends of the same side. That was when we came across DARPA, and we projected the relationship

between the military and DARPA onto the relationship between Sam and Burns.

What sort of things does Sam's armour allow you to do in *Vanquish* that we perhaps wouldn't associate with a third-person shooter?

Mikami: One would be the fast movement that comes via the boost-assisted sliding. Another would be the power that the suit gives Sam, as he is able to destroy robots with his bare hands.

***Vanquish* almost looks like a hybrid of games like *Resident Evil 4* and *Devil May Cry* (or *Bayonetta*). Would you say those were suitable comparison points?**

Mikami: I don't know if that is the right comparison; however, the speed you find in action gameplay as opposed to shooter gameplay is something that we have taken and put into *Vanquish*.

Platinum Games, the studio behind *Bayonetta*, is making *Vanquish* for Sega. You can find out more at www.sega.co.uk/games/vanquish



The classic guitar hero knee slide has been given some extra oomph by *Vanquish*.



ONE GUN SAM

It's the transformer of the gun world

ONE OF SAM Burns' many interesting abilities is that rather than needing to pick up various weapons strewn on the battlefield his one gun can morph into many different types of firearm to support his situation. That means that at any moment he can switch between an assault rifle to a sniper rifle, to a shotgun and so on all with a press of the D-pad. It's decisions like this that should help to make *Vanquish* one of the most free-flowing and action-packed shooters around later this year.



Boss battles promise to be as ridiculous as those we enjoyed in *Bayonetta*.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Mikami and Inaba are two of the most respected developers around.
- The third-person-shooter genre could really do with some freshening up.
- Vanquish* looks as dazzling as *Bayonetta* at around the same time of development.
- Vanquish*'s high-pace gameplay is like nothing else out there right now.

READ ME

Mikami is already teasing a project from his new studio Tango and is working on a still unannounced game with *No More Heroes* creator Suda51.

PREVIEW



Freestyling will have a big part to play in DJ Hero 2.

FIRST LOOK



RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER

DJ Hero 2

Two turntables and a microphone

The story of *DJ Hero 2*, so far at least, is one of rational, well-thought-out design decisions and of at least one sensible business decision. While other music game developers have been known to come up with bigger, wackier, more gimmicky ideas with each new iteration of their game, FreeStyleGames is taking a much more measured, sober approach to proceedings, focusing quite simply on making *DJ Hero* better.

Broadly speaking, *DJ Hero 2* is an improvement on *DJ Hero* because it's more social and it allows for more

very popular (although rock artists, including Metallica, have been mixed for *DJ Hero 2*), and proper mark-ups and scoring for vocals have been added by popular request. We expect the whole experience to feel more inclusive as a result.

There are also DJ Battles, which are turn-taking, call and response mixes for two players, or one player against AI. There are thankfully no stupid power-ups à la *Guitar Hero*'s Battle mode, it's really just a mode that feels more tailored towards a two DJ face-off scenario.

Beating an opponent or achieving a high score won't just come down to hitting all the preset beats in *DJ Hero 2*, as the game will be assessing your freestyling skills in a number of ways, too. Tracks now have freestyle scratching and cross-fading sections, where you don't have to follow a set pattern, but will be rated according to the rhythm of your scratching and timing of your cross-fading. So, nothing spectacular to shout about – it's just better.

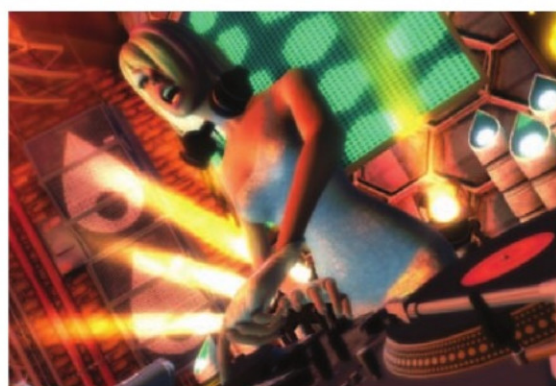
DJ Hero 2 is being developed by FreeStyleGames. Visit the website for more info: www.freestylegames.com

DJ Hero 2 is more social and allows for more freedom and creativity

freedom and creativity. It's more social because it now has some proper multiplayer modes. Party Play has been lifted straight out of *Guitar Hero* and allows players to drop in and out at any point during a mix or set. Those players can be on decks or on vocals, but not on guitar. Guitar support has been removed simply because it wasn't



There will be more famous names involved, with DJ Shadow and David Guetta already mooted.



EMPIRE RECORDS

What a massive jockey

THE MAIN SINGLE-PLAYER mode in *DJ Hero 2* is called Empire mode and promises to have much more to it than a list of venues and tracks to play through. Few details have been revealed yet, but FreeStyle is aiming to capture the experience of a DJ rising through the ranks and creating his or her very own music empire. One thing you won't be doing, at least not in this version of *DJ Hero*, is embarking on an epic, mythical quest.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- It's just like *DJ Hero*, only better.
- Better multiplayer modes than last time.
- An even bigger, more popular roster of artists this time.
- More opportunities for showing off your freestyling skills.

READ ME

FreeStyle's creative director Jamie Jackson described the RRP for the original *DJ Hero* as an "interesting price" and promised the *DJ Hero 2* bundle would be cheaper.



Multiplayer modes have been improved over those on offer in the first game.



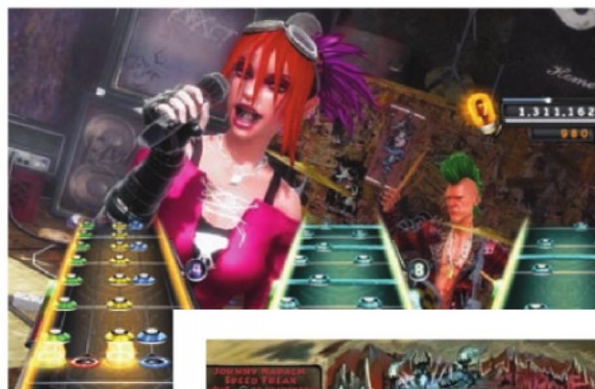
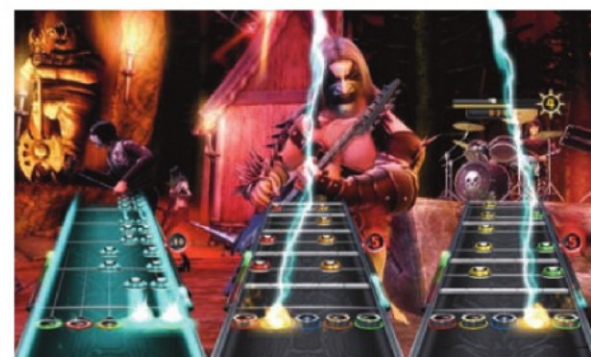
There's no denying Axel Steel is looking more like Eddie Riggs than ever.



Each character can now transmute into Warrior form, which grants them unique scoring bonuses.



Each character now has a matching set list and songs, so Johnny Napalm plays punk tracks at legendary New York club, CBGB.



QUEST > CAREER

Let he who hath understanding reckon the number of The Beast

IF YOU WERE bored at the idea of having to work your way up to global stardom then we have good news. Career mode has been replaced by Quest mode, which has a proper rock story, drawing from very similar influences as *Brütal Legend*. Your quest is to recruit the eight Warriors Of Rock 'til you have an army of immortals fit to take on The Beast. Most non-heinous.

RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER

Guitar Hero: Warriors Of Rock

Warriors of the world united

To say that Neversoft was thrown in at the deep end when it took over the reins of the *Guitar Hero* brand in 2006 would be an understatement. For a developer with no experience of music games to take over a franchise from a developer with tons of experience of them, then have to compete directly against that same developer while the genre expanded and diversified at a dizzying rate can't have been easy. Neversoft held firm enough and the series continued to be a great success but it did, somewhere along the way, lose its identity. While Harmonix's vision for *Rock Band* was clear from the start – it was to be not just a game,

but a platform for music – Neversoft was too busy keeping up with a wide variety of demands, trends and advances to carve out a *Guitar Hero* in its own image. Last year saw music games reach saturation point, with more 'Hero' and 'Rock Band' titles released in 2009 than in any other year ever and a slight decrease in sales suggesting that perhaps the mainstream, casual audience had decided enough was enough.

So finally Neversoft has the chance to focus on the true fans, and the result is a *Guitar Hero* title with more personality than any before it. Needless licensing is out; fire, steel and ROCK are in. EXCELLENT! [does air guitar solo].

Neversoft has decided to bring *Guitar Hero*'s own original characters back to the fore, granting each one a Warrior form, which carries special scoring benefits when activated during a song. You don't choose a character at the start, though, you have to travel the rock world recruiting each one in turn by taking them on at their own genre of rock on their own turf. The story is linked together with proper cut-scenes for the first time and narrative from long-tongued rock legend, Gene Simmons.

Guitar Hero: Warriors Of Rock is being developed by Neversoft. Check the website for more details: www.neversoft.com

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- The Rockers have evolved into Warriors, with each character having their own Warrior form.
- A proper, enjoyable story with proper, rockin' cut-scenes.
- No celebrity playable characters thrown in for no particular reason...
- ...Although the story is narrated by Gene 'God Of Thunder' Simmons.

READ ME

Megadeth's founder Dave Mustaine has written a really hard song called *Sudden Death* especially for the game.



Two Lightsabers means death to twice as many Stormtroopers.

Any second now two logs will swing in and crush the Scoutwalker's head.



Is this the real Starkiller or just a clone? We'll find out soon enough.

RUNNIN' AWAY

Even an elite Jedi's got to leg it occasionally. LUCASARTS HOPES TO mix things up a bit in *The Force Unleashed II* with what it calls "run for your life moments". As you may have guessed these are bits where Starkiller has got so carried away zapping and hitting things that something important has got damaged, everything's started blowing up and he's running away telling anyone who asks that it was like that when he found it.



There will be a brand-new selection of powers to play with.

RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER

Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II

A brand-new episode of The Apprentice

That scary, angry, power-mad, heavy-breathing fella is up to his old tricks again, and no, we're not talking about Lord Alan Sugar. We are of course referring to Lord Vader, Darth to his pals, Anakin to his mum. So, what sort of tricks has Vader been up to exactly? Well, that's not entirely clear. During the opening act of the game, he claims to have been making lots of failed clones of Starkiller, his secret apprentice, but one of those

Now, there's a much greater variety of things to do

clones escapes – the one you end up playing as, naturally – and General Kota tells him that he can't be a clone as he has extraordinary Jedi powers and no one can clone those. Not even Vader. But if this version of Starkiller isn't a clone, how is he alive? Didn't Starkiller die at the end of the first game? Hmm... seems like there's a fiendish plot waiting to unfurl here.

So, aside from the born-again Starkiller, what else is new in *The Force Unleashed II*? Well, broadly speaking, it's better. The last one sold 7 million copies on the strength of its story and of the basic idea that playing as a character with excessive Force powers is fundamentally cool. Aside from these details, it was not a particularly good game. But it did feel like a game that could benefit from a sequel. LucasArts had those Force physics nailed down nicely last time, but didn't seem to have put much else in around them. Now, though, there's a much greater variety of things to do – you've got dual Lightsabers, you've got new Force powers, there are loads more ways to use the environment, the enemies are actually *different* to each other... and all those sorts of things. Sounds like you won't have to Force yourself to play through this one.

Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II is being developed by LucasArts. Check the website for more details: www.lucasarts.com

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Two Lightsabers for the price of one.
- Much more varied than the last one.
- Continues what was, to be fair, a decent story.
- Erm... the Force is strong in this one.

READ ME

You can use Jedi mind tricks to make enemies do stupid stuff like walk off the edge of platforms, with really long drops under them.



RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER

Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions

Now in three dimensions

When we say "now in three dimensions" we're not suggesting *Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions* is set to support the PlayStation 3's forthcoming 3D display capabilities. No, we're just referring to the third dimension or, if you will, universe of the four to be featured in the game. 'Amazing' and 'Noir' were announced along with the game back in April, and now '2099' has been added to the list.

Spider-Man 2099, real name Miguel O'Hara, is a scientist who, according to Activision's version of events, was granted his spider-powers after getting bitten by a genetically modified spider. It's good to see spiders keeping up with the latest and most paranoia-inducing technologies. Radioactivity is so Fifties.

His nemesis is Hobgoblin 2099 who, despite having the same second name is not his brother. They are not the offspring of proud parents Mr and Mrs 2099. Hobgoblin 2099 won't just



Spider-Man Noir's main villain, the Goblin, is based in this freaky carnival ground.

be a boss battle at the end of a bunch of levels filled with about 200 identical henchmen, though. Like all the major supervillains in the game, Hobgoblin 2099 will be encountered repeatedly during his corresponding chapter so you will have the opportunity to fight him in a number of different settings and in a number of different ways. Spider-Man 2099 has big talons on his wrists, so expect to use those a lot whoever you are fighting.

Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions is being developed by Beenox. Check the website for more details: www.beenox.com/en

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Four different Spider-Man looks, actors and styles of play.
- Shattered Dimensions* is visually very true to the comics.
- Different to all those other *Spider-Man* games out there.
- Spider-Man 2099 is a darn sight better than Man-Spider.



You could call it *Spider-Man... in space!* But it's actually in New York.



True Crime features lots of bone-crunching melee combat.



Being a cop doesn't stop you shooting guys in the face.

RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER

True Crime

Fictional crime really, but never mind

What do you get if you cross *Grand Theft Auto* with *Dead To Rights: Retribution*? Something very much like *True Crime*, we reckon. In the latest demo, we didn't see much of the *GTA* side of things, as Wei Shen our heroic (or not) undercover cop drove straight along the GPS line to his objective without dicking around or taking any detours on the way. We saw a

little bit of the city of Hong Kong, though. It wasn't as detailed or lifelike as *Liberty City*, but it looked pretty good as far as we could tell. Very orange for some reason, though.

Anyway, arriving at a derelict warehouse where a rival Triad gang was stuffing packages of magic white powder into mannequins for smuggling, the similarities to *Dead To Rights: Retribution* began to emerge. Not so much because *True Crime* is a bit rosey, although this is still an early build so there were a few hiccups on the way, but because the tone and style of the action seemed very similar. There are lots of brutal, bone-crunching melee attacks, some of which warrant slo-mo close-ups, and room for quite a lot of improvisation and creativity. We'd say *True Crime* does a better job of involving the environment in the action, mind you. And there's no testicle-starved dog to be seen anywhere either.



True Crime is being developed by United Front Games. Check the website for more details: www.unitedfrontgames.com

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- It's the follow-up to the second-biggest-selling sandbox game ever.
- You get to be an undercover cop without any of the paperwork.
- It has loads of big swear words in it, which certainly impressed us.
- It's pretty funny. We just hope it's supposed to be.

PREVIEW



It will be familiar fare for fans of JRPGs.

CLOTHES MAKE THE MAN

A new approach to class selection in *Final Fantasy XIV*, an area where it was rather weak in its last *Online* outing. Square Enix has allowed you to change your class on the fly by simply changing armour. If you're part of a big group and your particular class of character is well catered for you can switch armour and be of more use to your guild of characters by offering something different to the fight. It keeps the game feeling open and should be a huge benefit to players who perhaps don't have that much MMO experience.



We didn't see much of the game, but what we did see amazed us.



We're clearing our diaries now ready for *Final Fantasy XIV*'s release.



Unlike a lot of MMOs out there, *Final Fantasy XIV* looks absolutely stunning.



From what Square Enix's Hiromichi Tanaka told us, we'd expect to see this arrive in 3D.



HANDS-ON

RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER

Final Fantasy XIV

Time to give up on the notion of leading a real life

As we approached Square Enix's latest attempt at an MMO we couldn't help but feel a little nervous. For one thing *Final Fantasy* hasn't set the world alight as a multiplayer game in the past (*Final Fantasy XI* has a following, but not a huge one) and getting hands-on time with one, especially at a gaming event, doesn't tend to give you much time to really explore the world. We reckon we played 0.00000001% of the game as a whole. However, we were astounded by what we saw.

First off we created a character. We tried a few variations from slender ladies to bearded men, but there was no way we could get our creation to look like anything other than an androgynous camp man. That's the JRPG way. Still, if you don't mind that, and we don't, having played this genre for the best part of two decades, they all looked pretty cool if anime is your thing.

Next we were taken through the interface. Very standard stuff in fact. MMO fans will be instantly familiar. Sheathe and unsheathe your weapon and you can run faster or slower, be ready or unready for battle respectively. In the demo

section a vast array of combat moves cheerfully adorned the lower taskbar area of the screen. Next to our target was its health and battle gauge and our own stamina gauge. Within our stamina gauge was a smaller bar which represented the stamina cost of pulling off the next attack we'd selected; different attacks, buffs and so on require different amounts of your stamina, which recharges in real-time.

Pretty early on in any fight, you're going to run down your stamina bar, especially if you need to use buffs to get the upper hand on the enemy. From there on in attacking and defending becomes a largely turn-based affair, allowing you to carefully choose your next tactic while your stamina recharges. Some people may find all this stat-paced, slow, plodding battling boring. Us? We absolutely love it. It's MMO battle chess and we can't even tell you how relieved we are that it functions in this way.

It was near impossible to get a sense of scale of the world of *Final Fantasy XIV* since the entire demo quest took place in some rather lovely caves. It involved chasing huge armoured crabs (Giant

Enemy Crab!) and to do so we were teamed up with three other players taking the roles of other character archetypes. We were a warrior class, but there are magic, priest and all the usual variations of tank, DPS and battle support available.

But here's the rub; the game is beautiful. This is something that always irks us about MMOs. Almost unanimously MMO developers tend

ground up. And, we can exclusively reveal that the game will most likely find its way into the hands of players with the option to switch into 3D, should you have the necessary gear. Sitting lonely and unloved in a dark corner of the demo area was the game running in 3D on a PC. When quizzed about this, our man from Square Enix told us that they were conducting a feasibility test. Hmm.

We'd say it's a near-certainty that *Final Fantasy XIV* will be arriving in 3D

for the most part to allow for the lowest possible denominator when it comes to your PC's configuration. They want Johnny Skint to be able to play their MMO on his three-year-old laptop and while there is a sliding scale, catering for these types of players ultimately means that during the development stage very little of the overall budget is spent on making sure those in the higher echelons of PC specification get the eye candy they paid for.

No such worry with *FFXIV*. Its primary format is PS3 and it's with an eye on that kind of power that the game has been created from the

Later, during our interview with Square Enix's VP of software development, Hiromichi Tanaka, we asked him about it and he told us that "because it's an MMO, it's very important to be 'in' the game. 3D really adds that aspect to your gaming experience." Take what you will from that, but we'd say that's a near-certainty that it will be arriving in 3D. Sony is pushing hard to be the leader in 3D gaming and when you consider how massive *FFXIV* is, two and two most definitely make four.

Overall, we were hugely impressed with *Final Fantasy XIV*. Though it slightly terrifies us how much of our lives may be scooped up by its very existence in the future. Ah well, another year another game.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Vast and detailed world that's as good as anything in *Final Fantasy*'s past.
- Amazing visuals that take full advantage of the power of the PS3.

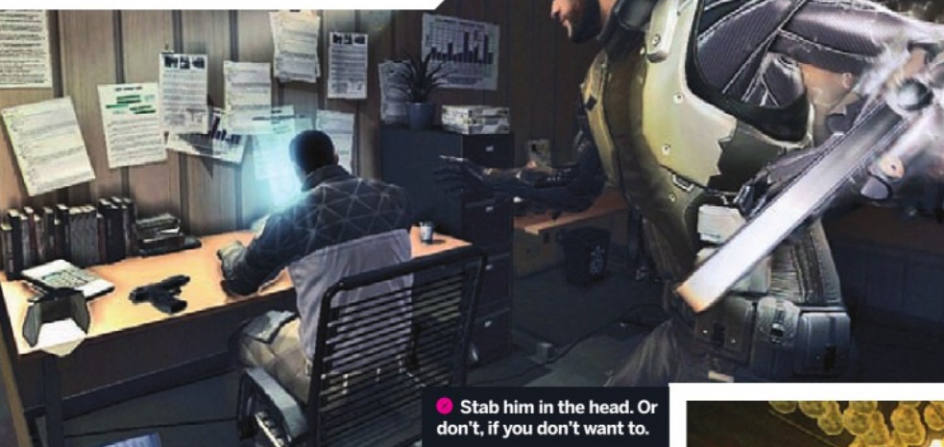
- Combat system that merges the best from MMOs and classic FF mechanics.
- Along with *DC Universe Online*, the opening wave of MMOs could lead to more.

READ ME

Sony is publishing three MMOs on the PS3. *The Agency*, *DC Universe Online* and *Free Realms* are all on the way in the next year.

As always Square Enix is handling the development of *Final Fantasy XIV* in house. You can find out more at www.finalfantasyxiv.com

PREVIEW



Stab him in the head. Or don't, if you don't want to.



FAQ

Upgrade your robo-parts so you can live more, see more, do more.



"Come here often?"



Conversations can get ugly. Gun-ugly.

RELEASE DATE: TBC 2011

Deus Ex: Human Revolution

Not to be confused with any game we're not excited about

Deus Ex – that's supposed to be quite good, right?

You're not wrong. The first game is regularly hailed as one of the finest titles the gaming world has ever produced. The second one's not that bad either, though it gets a lashing.

So I should care about this then?

Yes. Originally we weren't so sure, but *that* trailer blew us all away, and the more we hear and see of the game the more excited we get. It may not have anyone from the original game on board, but that doesn't stop this from being a bona-fide *Deus Ex* game.

What does that even mean?

Well, you won't just be running around shooting people. You'll be talking, hacking, creeping, sneaking, avoiding detection, using the enemy's own weapons against them, stealing, buying, selling and talking a bit more. The game is open

to an individual approach – one person might just kill everyone to get past this checkpoint, another would use cloak and dagger – it's up to you.

But... but... how?

Well, you're a cybernetically enhanced chap by the name of Adam Jensen. Being of the robotic persuasion, Jensen uses powers and abilities which will aid him in his missions – invisibility, super strength, better hacking and so on. These abilities can be switched out, changed and upgraded as you progress, lending *Human Revolution* an RPG element to its FPS mould.

So I'm a superhero then?

Sort of. Your powers are limited by energy reserves, which don't recharge very quickly. And without any upgrades you are still human, and a few bullets to the chest can put you down permanently. Plus there's the fact that this is the

future, and in this world you're not the only one with a robotic mega-sword in your arm. So yes, you are a superhero (or villain, depending on how you play), but you're competing in a world of superheroes.

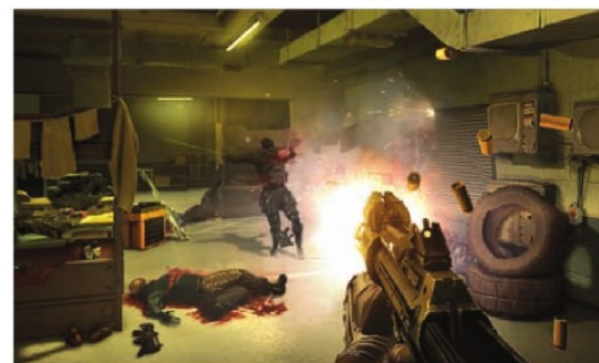
You mentioned talking?

Yes. Dialogue is approached like a battle, with the player pushing the conversation in a direction they want, and judging the reactions of the NPC based on what they're saying and how they sound. It's similar to *Alpha Protocol*, though it's definitely not *the same*.

It looks quite nice, doesn't it?

Yes, it does. We're happy to see such a gorgeous, cyberpunk world for the first time in what seems like forever. The 'future renaissance' thing really does work well.

Deus Ex: Human Revolution is being developed by Eidos Montreal. Check out www.deusex.com for more details.



YES, WE CAN!

When apprehension turns to tentative confidence

SET 25 YEARS before the original *Deus Ex*, *Human Revolution* may well see the return of characters from the older games and some classic mechanics. Other than that, though, this is a bigger, more ambitious game than before. Whether Eidos Montreal can pull it off is another thing, especially as its audience is a band of foaming-mouthed *Deus Ex* die-hards.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Deus Ex is one of the best games that's ever been made.
- Eidos Montreal looks to be paying a lot of attention to the source material.
- Individual choice plays its part in many aspects of the game.
- Human Revolution really has quite a lovely art style.

READ ME

The first *Deus Ex* did actually come out on PS2 (Play 88, 87%), but we weren't on the receiving end of the... "divisive" sequel, *Invisible War*.



● Custom characters can actually look pretty cool; real DC characters have less of a chance. Seriously, is that a leprechaun?



RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER

DC Universe Online

It's finally here! Well... almost

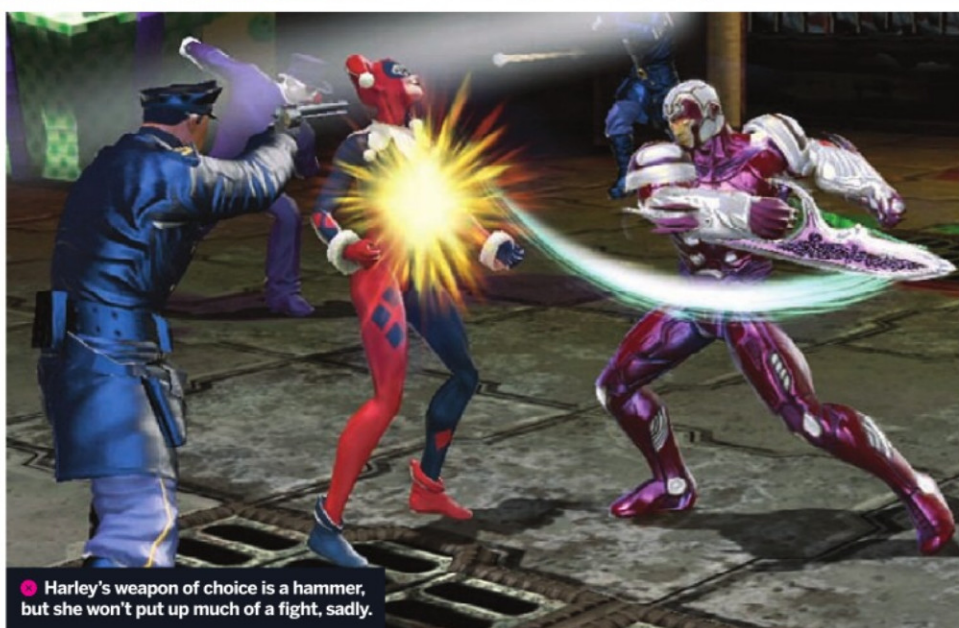
DC Universe Online is starting to look like an actual game. Sure, it's been 'playable' for the past year or so; it's had graphics, sound, and even Superman and Lex Luthor pummeling each other while custom superheroes and villains brawl throughout Metropolis. But if the latest instance SOE is showing off at E3 is any indication, the ambitious MMO is finally making its way towards the home stretch.

Taking place in the Amusement Mile zone of Gotham, this story-driven dungeon sees heroes battling their way to Harley Quinn, who has taken Robin captive. Even though this dungeon is much more claustrophobic than the open-world set pieces previously exhibited, it is easily the most visually impressive yet. Harley's dark lair is adorned with Christmas lights and giant physics-based globes which can be knocked or thrown into enemies. (Should players choose a villainous route, they will be fighting alongside Harley's goons against Gotham PD, with Robin having taken the Joker's beloved sidekick hostage instead.) Upon defeat, Harley drops her signature headwear which can

be worn without affecting armour stats as per the game's cosmetic gear system. Although the gameplay mechanics of DCUO have been explained in previous issues of **Play**, it's important to note that despite Sony claiming combat is the backbone more so than in any other MMO, it feels a bit off: attacks lack impact, and special abilities are glitchy at times, especially when interacting with the environment.

The Amusement Mile is just one of the many instances planned, with larger focus going into endgame raids revolving around major struggles such as Batman versus Joker and Superman versus Lex Luthor. The story elements are not copied and pasted verbatim from the convoluted comics but are rather an 'ideal slice' of the DC canon. A weekly companion comic is planned to coincide with in-game events, and considering how complicated and ridiculous the original comics have become, DC Universe Online is looking like the best way to enjoy DC's characters outside of a Christopher Nolan movie.

DCUO is being developed by Sony Online Entertainment. Visit dcuo.station.sony.com for more details.



● Harley's weapon of choice is a hammer, but she won't put up much of a fight, sadly.



YOU ARE THE MOUNT

We mean... you don't need to mount anything

MOUNTS HAVE BECOME a mainstay of MMOs over the years, but in the DC universe, far away from Azeroth and Middle-earth, players won't have much need for \$25 astral ponies. Creative director Jens Anderson pointed out that the characters themselves serve the purpose of mounts, but what about the Batmobile, or Wonder Woman's invisible jet? Our money is on an expansion pack...



● Characters are built from five key ingredients: allegiance, abilities, weapon, gear and element.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

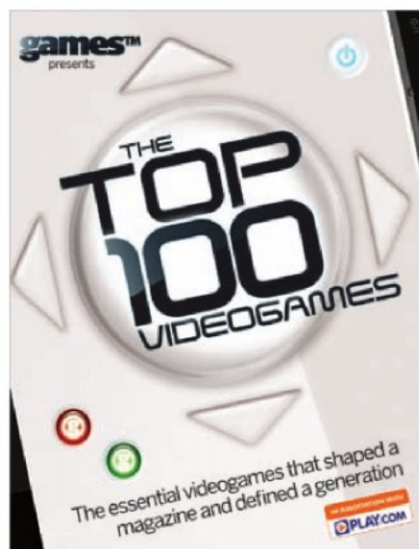
- Custom characters fighting side-by-side with DC's most famous.
- They must have learned their lesson with *Star Wars*, right? Right?!
- Great visuals for a console MMO, assuming the lag stays hidden.
- Not illustrated by the infants who draw the actual comics these days.

READ ME

DCUO is all about combat, superpowers and bringing a quality MMO to home consoles. And trying to look up Supergirl's skirt as she flies over Metropolis!

Remember when gaming was great?

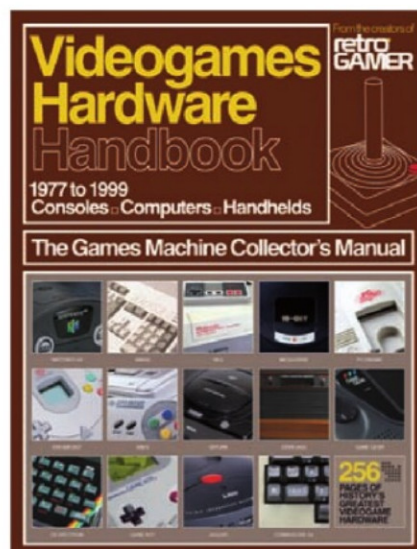
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● Not something you want to see (it means you're dying).



● Safe to say, you don't play as a bunch of nice people.

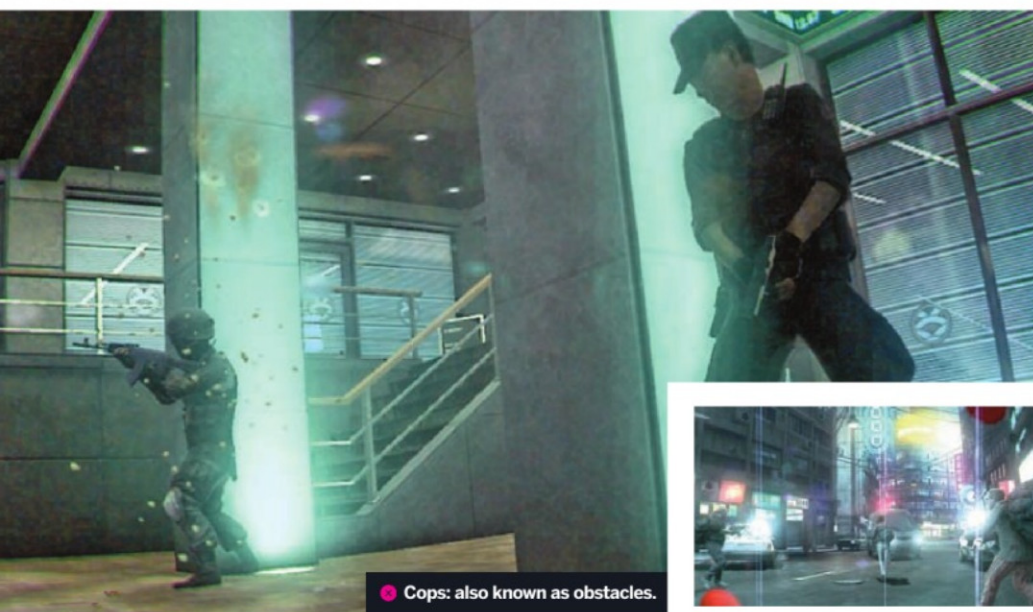
RELEASE DATE: AUGUST

Kane & Lynch 2: Dog Days

Cop a load of this



● Keep an eye on this lot, they may turn on you at any minute.



● Cops: also known as obstacles.



LOOKS AIN'T EVERYTHING

Style, substance, anything in-between?

PRESENTATION IS A key factor in *Kane & Lynch 2*, with the YouTube-style looks something IO is keen to highlight to any and all. It's good to see, then, that the multiplayer modes retain this look, even if they do (understandably) keep things in a traditional third-person view. That's the reason these screens look so weird.

It's often a good sign when you're playing a game in multiplayer and you can hear the lamentations of your opponents as you defeat them once again. It's even better when those lamentations come direct from the mouths of the developers of the very game you are beating them at. We're officially better at *Kane & Lynch 2* than the development team at IO Interactive.

Bluster aside, our experience with the game stretched to playing three different online modes – Fragile Alliance, Undercover Cop and Cops & Robbers – with each offering its own spin on the runny, shooty, criminally world of *Kane & Lynch*. Fragile Alliance has a team of players banding together to steal \$4 million before heading to an escape van and fleeing the scene. Simple? Certainly not, that would be boring. As the name suggests, teamwork in this mode walks a tightrope between flowing perfection and outright anarchy, with players able to turn on each other at any time – after all, why split the winnings four ways when you could try to get away with 100 per cent of the profits? Shooting your comrades doesn't come without penalty, though, as you will

be marked as a traitor and become a target for all your former team-mates – and that's before we get to the fact the police are on the scene trying to gun you down for robbery in Shanghai.

Undercover Cop mode is the same as Fragile Alliance but with one change – one member of the robbery squad is a player-controlled cop in disguise. As soon as a crime is committed they must attempt to stop the rest of the team from completing their mission, obviously by killing everyone. This is a tense, tense mode and trust is a serious issue throughout play. In other words it's brilliant fun. Cops & Robbers is, as the name suggests, like a traditional team deathmatch between the city's finest and the city's worst – the least interesting of the modes, perhaps, but still a lot of fun to play.

We were impressed by what *Kane & Lynch 2* offers in its online play. It's definitely something different and creates a mood of tension you just don't get in other games.

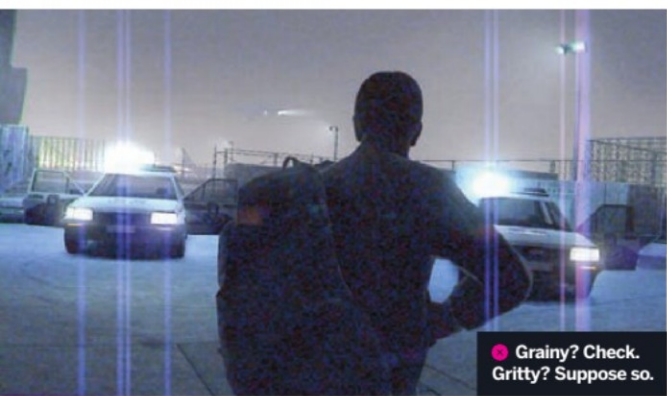
Kane & Lynch 2: Dog Days is being developed by IO Interactive. Check out the website for more details: www.kaneandlynch.com

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- A nice selection of interesting play modes are on offer.
- Modes are balanced, well thought out and offer something a bit different.
- There's tension between team-mates, seeing as they can shoot each other.
- Beating IO Interactive at its own game: absolutely hilarious.

READ ME

The first sighting of the *Kane & Lynch* movie posters were spotted the other month, with the film apparently starring none other than Bruce Willis.



● Grainy? Check. Gritty? Suppose so.

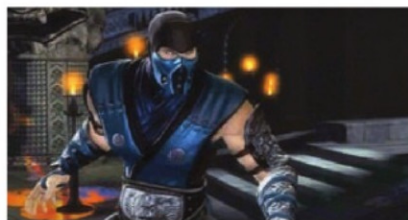
THE LATEST ON...



EL SHADDAI: ASCENSION OF THE METATRON

Publisher: Ignition Entertainment **Developer:** Ignition Tokyo **ETA:** 2011 **Format:** PS3

AS THE NAME implies this is a game with a religious theme to it. You play as the angel Enoch who travels to Earth to capture the souls of fallen angels and prevent God from raining down his own brand of wrath on humanity.



MORTAL KOMBAT

Publisher: Warner Bros. **Developer:** NetherRealm Studios **ETA:** 2011 **Format:** PS3

BROUGHT TO US for the first time by Warner Bros. since it bought the licence from Midway, *Mortal Kombat* is growing up again, aiming for a stiff adult rating and plenty of blood and gore. It's also got original creator Ed Boon behind it as a producer. It could be a real winner.



LUCHA FURY

Publisher: Punchers Impact **Developer:** Punchers Impact **ETA:** 2011 **Format:** PSN

MIXING SIDE-SCROLLING beat-'em-up action with the world of Mexican wrestling sounds like a good combination to us and that's exactly what this first game from Punchers Impact, *Lucha Fury*, is offering. If nothing else E3 has served up a host of PSN games to watch out for.



DEVIL'S THIRD

Publisher: THQ **Developer:** Valhalla Knights **ETA:** 2011 **Format:** PS3

FROM TOMONOBU ITAGAKI and a number of his fellow ex-Team Ninja comrades who made *Ninja Gaiden* and *Dead Or Alive*, *Devil's Third* is exactly the kind of ultra-violent third-person action game you would expect. It's got guns, swords and blood by the bucket loads.



MINDJACK

Publisher: Square Enix
Developer: Feelplus
ETA: October
Format: PS3

MIXING A LITTLE cyberpunk with multiplayer third-person shooting, this mind-hacking world of espionage promises to integrate online gaming and single-player seamlessly. It looks like a pretty crazy game with lots of classic Japanese design. With no small amount of *Ghost In The Shell* about it too we're already very excited by this Square Enix game.



CHILD OF EDEN

Publisher: Ubisoft **Developer:** Q Entertainment **ETA:** TBC **Format:** PS3

FROM THE MAKERS of *Rez* comes, well, basically *Rez 2*. *Child Of Eden* appears to be following in the footsteps of its predecessor with an on-rails shooting mechanic enhanced by trippy visuals and an interactive soundtrack that ebbs and flows with the action.



MICHAEL JACKSON: THE GAME

Publisher: Ubisoft **Developer:** Ubisoft
ETA: November **Format:** PS3

THE STORY GOES that the Jackson estate approached Ubisoft to make this game rather than the other way around. Either way this dancing-centric title based on the moves of the King Of Pop is likely to be a real unit shifter.



EAT THEM

Publisher: Sony **Developer:** Sony
ETA: 2011 **Format:** PS3

WITH USER-CREATED monsters on the scale of *Godzilla* and the ability to trash entire cartoon cities, *Eat Them* may not be gaining much attention at the moment but we're looking forward to it having enough *Katamari*-like charm to make it a winner on PS3.



PROJECT DUST

Publisher: Ubisoft
Developer: Ubisoft Montpellier
ETA: 2011 **Format:** PS3

FROM THE MAKER of retro classic *Another World*, *Project Dust* is looking to be something of a *Populous*-style god game where you help to save a civilisation by influencing and shaping the world around them. With its strong pedigree it should be another hit for Ubisoft.



JOURNEY

Publisher: Sony **Developer:** thatgamecompany **ETA:** 2011 **Format:** PSN

CAN A STORY of adventure and discovery be told without words? That's the question thatgamecompany is posing for its follow-up to *Flower*, as *Journey* attempts to capture us with beautiful visuals in a minimalist desert environment. Prepare for the unexpected.

All the best from E3 and beyond



BULLETSTORM

Publisher: EA
Developer: People Can Fly
ETA: 2011
Format: PS3

THIS COLLABORATION BETWEEN *Painkiller* makers People Can Fly and Epic Games, the minds behind *Gears Of War* and *Unreal Tournament III* is really picking up some buzz out of E3 where it blew people away. Almost literally. It's humour and mayhem make it one to watch.



DEAD SPACE 2

Publisher: EA **Developer:** Visceral Games
ETA: January 2011 **Format:** PS3

EA CONTINUES TO dodge the pre-Christmas release schedule with its action titles this coming year as it confirmed *Dead Space 2* would be held back until 28 January for its UK release. That way at least we'll have something to play after *Medal Of Honor* (EA is hoping).



DUNGEON SIEGE III

Publisher: Square Enix **Developer:** Obsidian
ETA: 2011 **Format:** PS3

COMING TO CONSOLES for the first time, *Dungeon Siege III* will be coming to PS3 via the fine folk at Obsidian, makers of *Alpha Protocol* and the upcoming *Fallout: New Vegas*. With the new studio comes a new emphasis on action rather than the slow-paced RPG play of before.



SLY COOPER COLLECTION

Publisher: Sony **Developer:** Sanzaru Games
ETA: November **Format:** PS3

OFFERING 3D AS well as an HD remake of the original trilogy from Sucker Punch, *Sly Cooper Collection* promises to be a bit of a winner this year. We know people really wanted some Team Ico love, but you'll just have to be patient. Sly is pretty cool in the meantime.



ROCK BAND 3

Publisher: EA **Developer:** Harmonix **ETA:** November **Format:** PS3

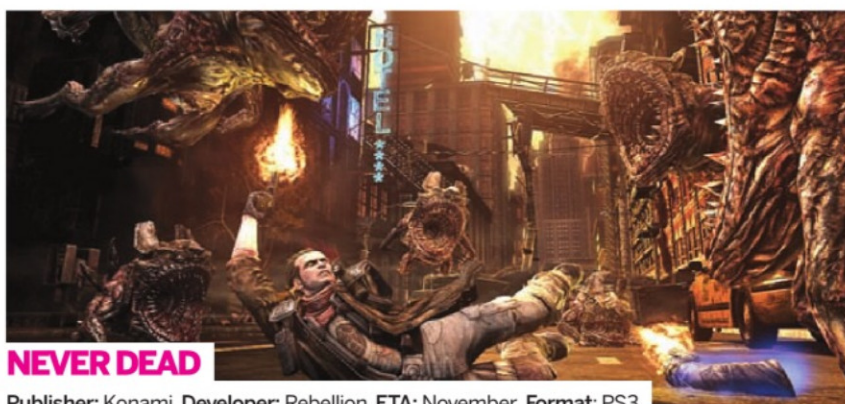
FOR A WHILE NOW we've been waiting to hear how Harmonix would make *Rock Band* more realistic and the newly announced Pro modes for *Rock Band 3* are the answer. You can now actually learn how to play guitar, bass, drums and piano with the game.



PATAPON 3

Publisher: Sony **Developer:** Japan Studio
ETA: September **Format:** PSP

IT'S GOOD TO see *Patapon* make a return, not that it's been all that long since the last one, but with 70 games due on PSP between E3 and Christmas this one was always going to be welcome. New monsters, new challenges and new rhythms beckon us yet again.



NEVER DEAD

Publisher: Konami **Developer:** Rebellion **ETA:** November **Format:** PS3

THE CITY HAS been taken over by horrific monsters! Oh no. What we need is a biker with lots of glib one-liners. That's the thinking behind *Never Dead* and we like it. What we like even more is that the biker can have his limbs chopped off without dying. He just picks them up later.



SORCERY

Publisher: Sony **Developer:** Sony
ETA: 2011 **Format:** PS3

MAKING FULL USE of the PlayStation Move, this magic-themed game was demoed at E3 and while it may not be as crowd pleasing as *Killzone 3*, its gameplay still piqued our interest. Magic-based games make a lot of sense with Move and this could be excellent.



DEF JAM RAPSTAR

Publisher: Konami **Developer:** Terminal Reality **ETA:** November **Format:** PS3

KONAMI IS HOPING that while music games appear to be in decline, this hip-hop-focused game will be able to tap into a market that the genre hasn't accommodated before. With artists such as Outkast, Tinchy Stryder and Drake all being added it should do at least that.



BATTLEFIELD: BAD COMPANY 2 - VIETNAM

Publisher: EA
Developer: DICE
ETA: October
Format: PS3

CHEEKY, CHEEKY EA. It seems there's nothing it won't do to steal Activision's thunder as *Call Of Duty* tackles that most infamous of American follies in the Far East. It's all good for us, though, as DICE offers us new multiplayer maps for this winter set in the region.



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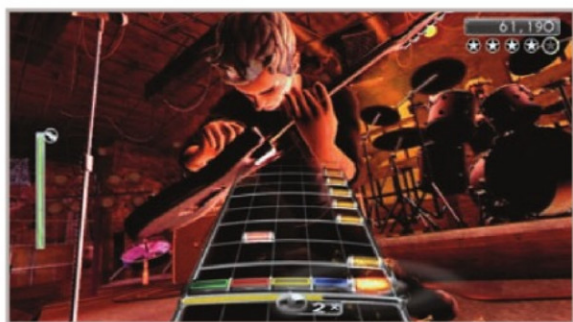
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PLAY MAG Reviews

点検

Playing bad games so you don't have to

Including: The Transformers reach their prime /// Green Day have a blast in Rock Band /// Stevie G purifies his balls



92 Green Day: Rock Band ps3
American idiots?



93 Tiger Woods PGA Tour 11 ps3
Tiger feat



94 Lego Harry Potter: Years 1-4 ps3
Harry from the block

review panel



Gavin Mackenzie

Reviewed:
Transformers: War For Cybertron, Green Day: Rock Band, Pure Football

Gav has recently been adopted – and on one occasion physically fought over – by two cats from the neighbourhood who like to invite themselves into his flat and swan around like they actually own the place. This was all well and good until one of the cats, Cringer (as Gav has decided to name him), refused point blank to leave the flat one morning, forcing Gav to lock him in for ten hours while he went to work. In Cringer's defence, he did at least pee near the toilet.

currently playing:
Split/Second



Ian Dransfield

Reviewed:
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 11, Prince Of Persia, Ace Combat: Joint Assault

Ian claims to have done nothing of interest this month except think about going to Manchester, which isn't very interesting and doesn't make it very easy to write something funny about him. We've a good mind to make him fill this space for himself in future. See how he likes having to come up with 75 words out of nothing. That will serve him right for leading such an empty, pathetic life and just going around sighing when he could be, y'know, seizing the day or something.

currently playing:
Final Fantasy XIII



Dan Howdle

Reviewed:
Lego Harry Potter: Years 1-4, Trinity Universe, BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger Portable

Dan has obtained some soft stuff this month. We would have asked him where it came from but he wasn't around when we needed to know, leaving us with no other option but to muse and speculate, checking the word count intermittently until it's reached about 75 words and then stop abruptly. Weird thing is Dan normally prefers the hard stuff, so what he's doing with soft stuff is a real mystery to us. Perhaps his doctor's warned him off the hard stuff.

currently playing:
Battlefield: Bad Company 2

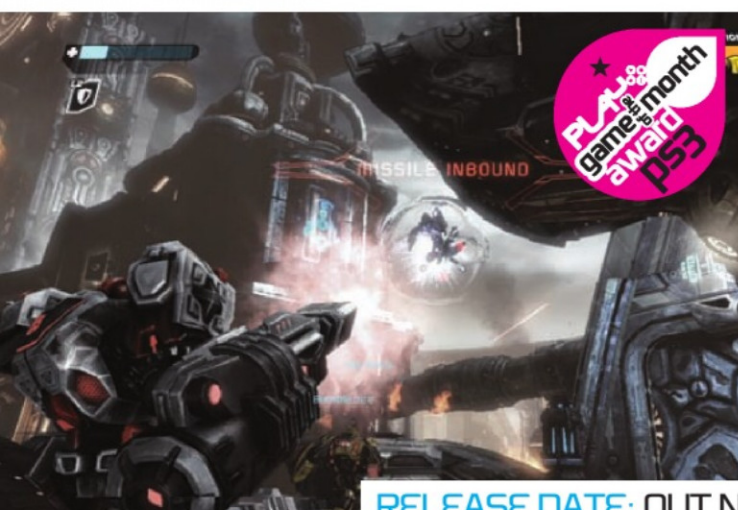


Adam Barnes

Reviewed:
International Cricket 2010

Adam was really struggling to think of something funny and interesting to tell us about himself this month until we asked him if he had any funny cat stories to share. Although not as good as Gav's cat story, Adam had a cat story of his own. He said he doesn't see his cat very often any more because it lives Oop North and he now lives Darn Sarf but he's going to pay it a visit next week. It's getting very old now and every time Adam sees it, he knows it could well be the last time. Now, you've got to admit, that is pretty funny.

currently playing:
Red Dead Redemption



DETAILS

Publisher
Activision
Developer
High Moon Studios
Price
£49.99
Players
1-16
Genre
Third-person shooter
Supports
720p, PlayStation Network, Downloadable content, DualShock 3, Dolby Digital 5.1
Age Rating
12
Website
www.transformersgame.com

Transformers: War For Cybertron

A good game in disguise

When we say 'in disguise,' we don't mean that *War For Cybertron* has ever pretended to be a bad game. It's just that it's a licensed game and we don't think it was unreasonable to expect something along similar lines to all those *Spider-Man* games Activision has been spinning out year on year even after the movie trilogy has run its course. Even when we saw it at preview stage and thought, yeah, it looked pretty good, we didn't really believe it. Oh, how cynical and jaded we are, but when so many licensed games so readily and shamelessly fleece fans of otherwise respectable franchises, can you blame us?

Whether or not it was reasonable of us to have our doubts about *War For Cybertron*, the fact is that it's really good. It's not outstanding, mind you, but it is solid,

polished, well-designed and fun. *Transformers* fans really are going to love it. In common with other licensed games, it is wholly generic, sticking well within the bounds of familiar, tried-and-tested formula. But where other licensed games tend to make the absolute bare minimum of effort, *War For Cybertron* seems to be fuelled by genuine enthusiasm for the property and a keen eye for detail.

From the very beginning, the presentation and atmosphere draw you in. It all feels very *Transformers*. It's a difficult tone to pin down because at its core it's just a vehicle for promoting a cool range of Eighties toys, but it also has this archaic air, like its steeped in history and nobility, which is ludicrous if you think about it. So don't. Just accept and embrace it with 100 per cent conviction, like High Moon Studios has.

Whatever it is that makes *Transformers* feel like *Transformers*, High Moon has nailed it where *Traveller's Tales* and *Luxoflux* failed to in the two *Transformers* movie games and, for that matter, where Michael Bay failed to in the movies themselves.

We'd have to admit that one of the many reasons we had our doubts about *War For Cybertron* was that the *Transformers* concept, by definition, is one that belongs on Earth. Otherwise why are they disguising themselves? Why do they look like cars and planes and tape cassettes and other earthly stuff? Well, it didn't take long playing *War For Cybertron* for us to decide that none of this matters. The Transformers and their home

planet are realised so convincingly here that it's very easy to believe in it all and to become totally engaged in the action.

And the action, by the way, is very well done. There are no clever gameplay ideas or slick mechanics to make it stand out, but it is surprisingly polished and satisfying and fun. You and your allies are essentially just facing off against waves of enemy Transformers in a not particularly wide variety of situations, which sounds like it would get boring fast, but there are *just* enough different enemy types and *just* enough different weapons

Benefits from breathless pacing and an impressive wealth of stuff going on

and abilities and *just* enough good, if unspectacular, design ideas to keep things interesting. It also benefits from breathless pacing and an impressive wealth of stuff going on around you almost all the time. You really feel like you're on a spectacular, magnificent world that's being torn apart by war and even if you're not a big *Transformers* fan it's hard not to get drawn in.

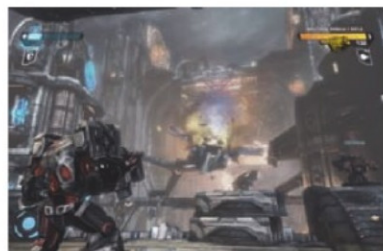
The only thing that's actually bad about *War For Cybertron* is the dialogue, but even that's a question of taste. Notwithstanding the untouchable Peter Cullen as Optimus Prime, the voice acting is at best embarrassingly hammy, and at worst stilted, awkward and unconvincing. To be fair to the actors they're working with a script full of some of the most witless banter and least wise cracks anyone has ever had to say in a

BLOW UP TOYS

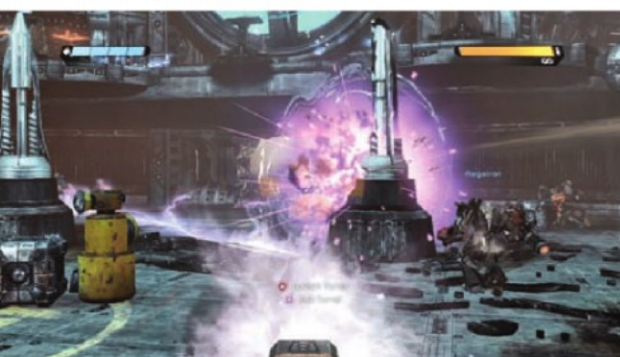
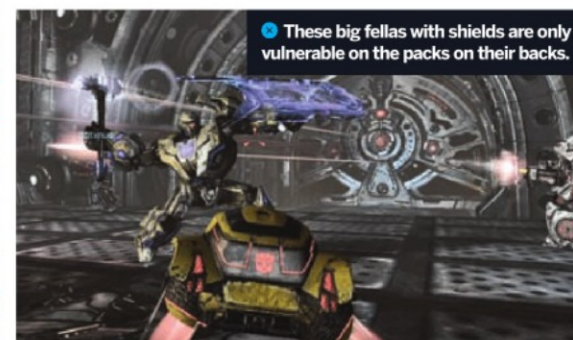
It's explosive bot time

IT'S RARE THAT five minutes goes by in *War For Cybertron* without something very large exploding all over the place. If it's not a Decepticon warship almost crashing into you, as it is in both these screens, it's a building falling down or an orbital

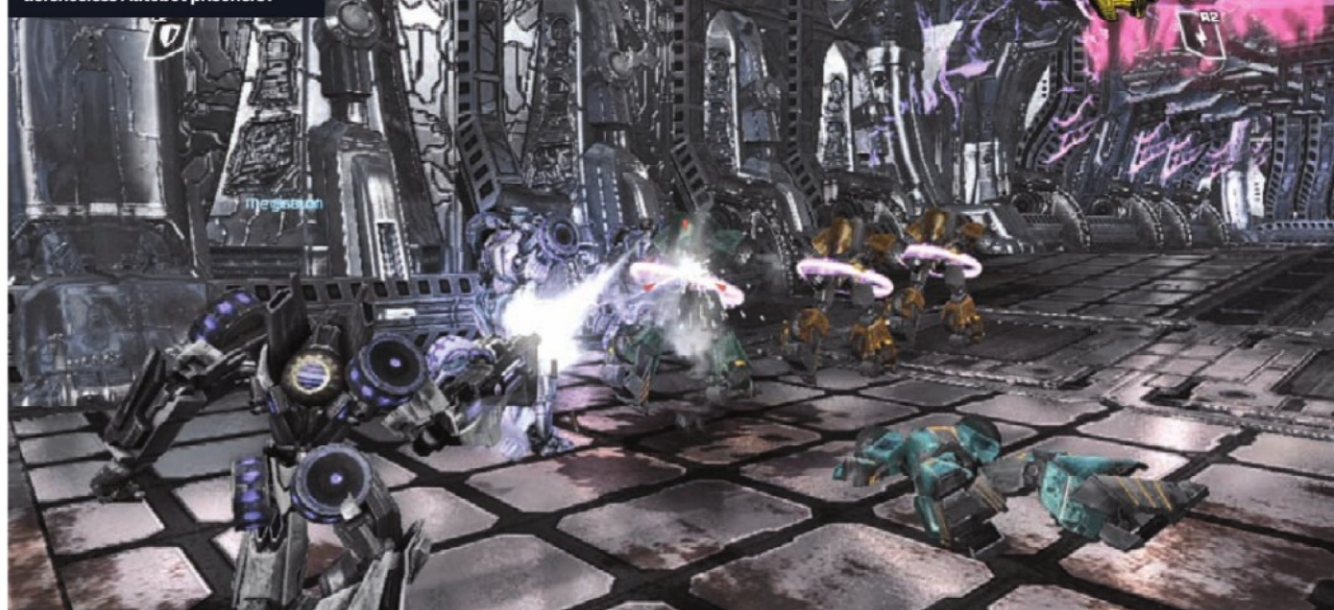
missile impacting on the planet's surface. It's a pretty simple way of keeping things exciting, but also a very effective one. You can't ever really get bored when you know there's probably yet another cataclysmic detonation just around the next corner.



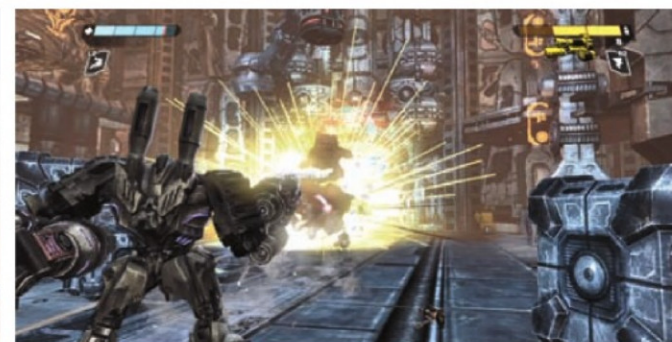
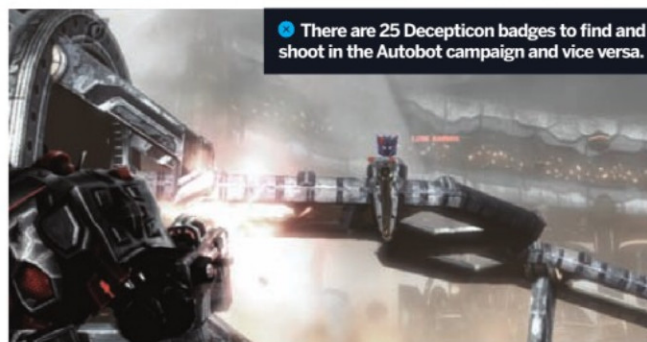
Transformers: War For Cybertron



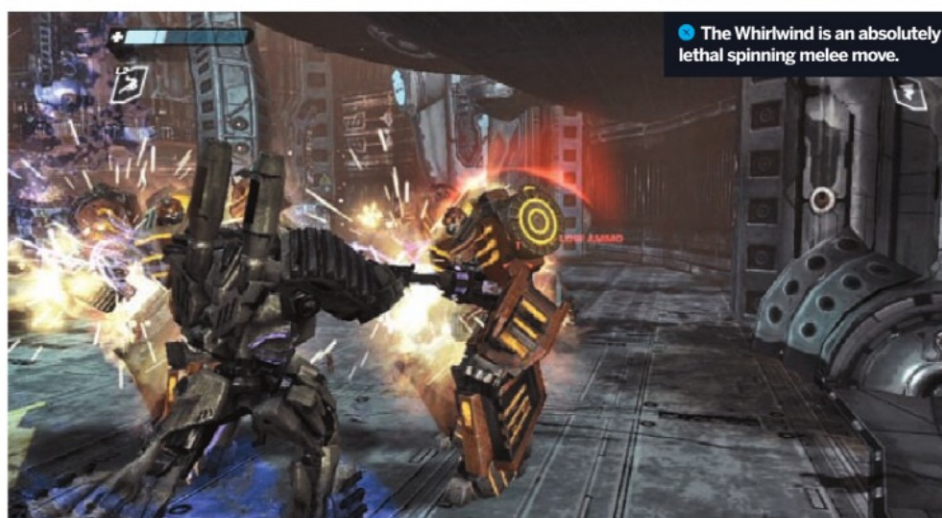
• If you want to be an especially evil Decepticon then why not kill some defenceless Autobot prisoners?



• There are 25 Decepticon badges to find and shoot in the Autobot campaign and vice versa.



• The Whirlwind is an absolutely lethal spinning melee move.



silly robotic voice. Still, if we look back at the scripts of the animated TV series without rose-tinted glasses on, they were similarly corny, so perhaps this is the way it should be.

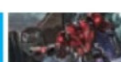
It's not going to win any awards for innovation or originality, but *War For Cybertron* can still stand among the best third-person shooters of this generation, licensed properties or otherwise, thanks to its remarkable attention to detail, simple-but-satisfying combat and polished production values. Exceptions to the 'all licensed games are crap' rule appear on a very exclusive, very short list, but *War For Cybertron* has made that list one game longer. Buy it without fear.

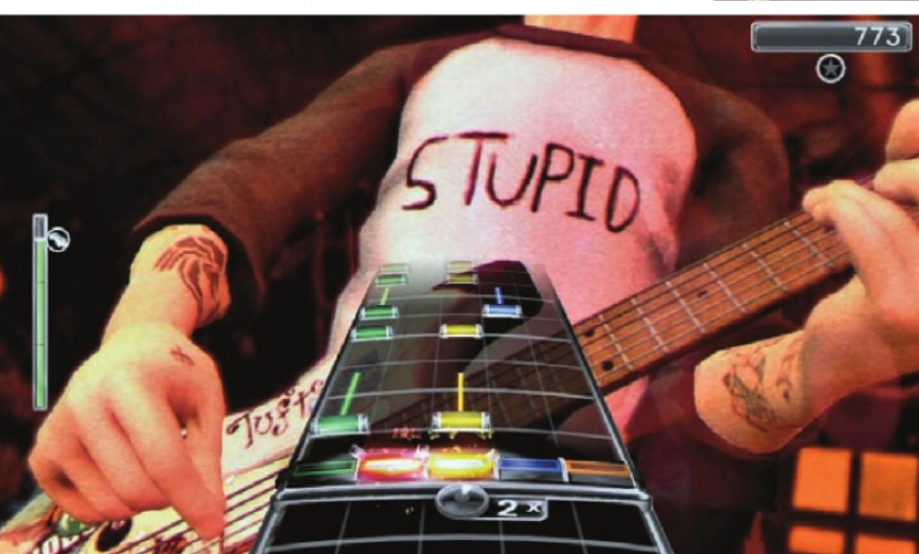
Gavin Mackenzie

VERDICT

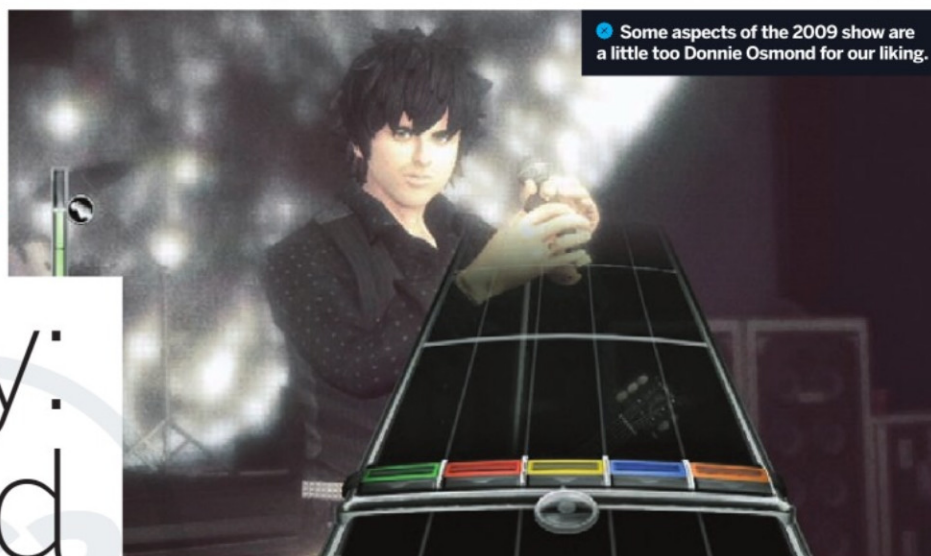
Transformers fans expecting to see their beloved bots dragged yet further into the mud by yet more lazy, misguided cash-cow milking will be delighted at what an enjoyable and faithful experience *War For Cybertron* has turned out to be.

80%





They've got his eyes just right, we'll give 'em that.



Some aspects of the 2009 show are a little too Donnie Osmond for our liking.



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Green Day: Rock Band

DETAILS

Publisher MTV Games
Developer Harmonix
Price £49.99
Players 1-4
Genre Party
Supports 720p, PlayStation Network, Downloadable content, Dolby Digital 5.1, guitar controller, drum kit controller, microphone
Age Rating 12
Website www.greendayrockband.com

"Do you have the time to listen to me ruin Basket Case on Expert?"

So, the latest one-artist band game is here and Green Day – the living, breathing personification of everything punk rock has become – are the latest group to be put through the rhythm-action plastification process. The result is a decent product, but one with two fairly major problems. The first is the music.

Now, we're not knocking Green Day's music outright, but it perhaps isn't best suited to the *Rock Band* format. This is, after all, no frills punk rock and as such is mostly quite samey and straightforward, especially on guitar and bass. The anthemic, singalong nature of much of Green Day's material makes vocals a lot of fun and the drum parts are surprisingly testing if, again, pretty samey, but as a whole Green Day songs do not make for great

rhythm-action gameplay. Of course, for a lot of this game's target audience, this isn't really the point, and there's no doubt that if you can round up a group of three or four Green Day fans to play as a full band, you'll have... ahem... the time of your life.

However, if you're the band member who's forked out £50 for the game, you'll have every right to feel short-changed. Where both *The Beatles* and *Metallica* games have paid full and fitting tribute to the full span of their respective artists' careers, *Green Day: Rock Band* feels like a bit of a half-a-job. To be fair, it's a better effort than the *Aerosmith* or *Van Halen Guitar Heros* or the *AC/DC Rock Band* pack, but it still feels incomplete. All you get is three shows – *The Warehouse* (1995),

Milton Keynes (2006) and *The Fox Theatre, Oakland* (2009) – consisting of a handful of sets each, totaling 47 songs. And there are six more, but they'll cost you extra.

It's not awful value for money, but surely fans want the whole story of Green Day's

Surely fans want the whole story of Green Day's career

career, not just three shows, one of which is fictional. We want to see their humble, snotty origins and we want to see what happened in that long wilderness period between *Dookie* and *American Idiot*, but no, Harmonix couldn't be bothered to make a slightly fatter character model for Billie Joe Armstrong. With a few more eras and some tracks from the classic punk bands Green Day draw influence from this could have been a must for fans, but as it is it's decidedly optional.

Gavin Mackenzie

VERDICT

A better treatment than *Aerosmith* or *AC/DC* got but still way short of the tributes paid to *Metallica* and *The Beatles*. Any band that deserves its own game, deserves for that game to be done better than this.

77%



All the splendour and majesty of Milton Keynes in full.



Or you could try



Rock Band 2 Issue 179
 Download all Clash and Ramones tracks for a taste of where Green Day came from. 96%

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Tiger Woods PGA Tour 11



DETAILS

Publisher
EA Sports
Developer
EA Tiburon
Price
£49.99
Players
1-24
Genre
Sports
Supports
720p, PlayStation Network,
Downloadable content,
Sixaxis, DualShock 3
Age Rating
3
Website
www.tigerwoodspgatur.easports.com

The newest addition to th... oh, who cares?

We put our foot down last year with *Tiger Woods PGA Tour 10* (69% **Play** 181) – we asked the series to take a break for its own good. Did EA Tiburon listen? Of course not. So here we have another uninspired entry into an increasingly redundant series. It certainly looks as if the foot will have to remain firmly down, lest *Tiger Woods 11* get any bold ideas that we might actually be looking on its lack of interesting additions or innovations in a favourable light.

The simple fact of the matter is the series is stuck in a rut, not moving forward in any great way. The addition of near-useless gimmicks like True Aim ("see the world like a real golfer! Destroy your ability to play the game properly!") enhance the experience only for those who don't actually like to enjoy playing games. As for the inclusion of the Focus meter, which depletes when you use super powers like extra spin, more accurate shots and view previews of where your putt will end up, in a game that strives for realism and accuracy so very

Just buy the far superior *Everybody's Golf* – a game with better looks, controls and online play



much, this just seems out of place. It all whiffs a little bit too much of desperation, truth be told.

Also of note is how *Tiger Woods 11* just doesn't look any better than two or three year old editions of the game, with bland, empty grass textures and character models that really don't look *that* great. And when you are attempting to take a shot – in a golf game, we should remind you – and you are confronted with slowdown, of all performance issues, you know there is something just not right with the game.

Unfortunately, the addition of a few new elements – True Aim, Focus and the Swing Tuner – some new courses, golfers and other bits and bobs (PlayStation Move support will be patched in eventually) add



up to a great big pile of nothing much, even if it is perfectly functional on a base level. *Tiger Woods 11* is a pointless addition to the series, not really worth purchasing even if you give a hoot about golf, purely because you can get a near-identical earlier version for a few quid now. Or just buy the far superior *Everybody's Golf* – a game with better looks, controls and online play than this. Poor show, Tiger. And we haven't even mentioned your infidelity.

Ian Dransfield

VERDICT

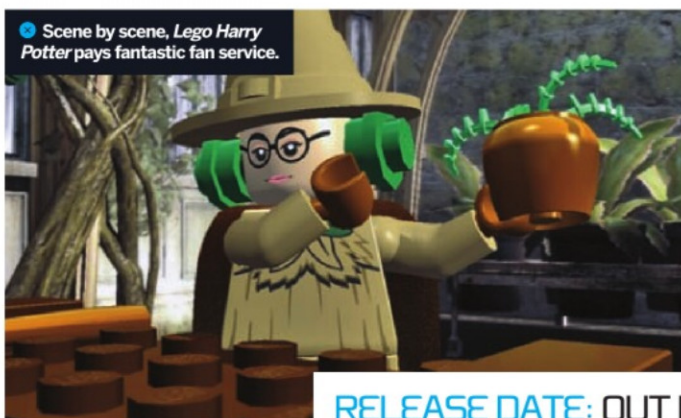
'Progress' seems to be a dirty word with the *Tiger Woods* series, if the last few entries are anything to go by. This entry is just not worth bothering with.

60%

Or you could try



Everybody's Golf: World Tour Issue 165
A far, far, far better game of golf, even though it's two years older than EA's latest effort. **91%**



Scene by scene, *Lego Harry Potter* pays fantastic fan service.

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW



Draco Malfoy is just as much the arse as he ever was.



DETAILS

Publisher
Warner Bros.
Developer
Traveller's Tales
Price
£44.99
Players
1-2
Genre
Platform/Puzzle
Supports
720p, PlayStation Network, DualShock 3, Dolby Digital 5.1
Age Rating
7
Website
www.lego.com

Lego Harry Potter: Years 1-4

Licensardium Legosa!

We're all sick to death of Lego games by now, right? At first it was a genius idea; some clever young spud had dreamed up the notion of combining Lego with the almighty power of the Force, the gaming public initially failed to get the concept, but then they played it, loved it and therefore granted licence for more games in the Lego franchise. *Lego Indiana Jones*, *Lego Batman*, more *Lego Star Wars* and so on.

But realistically it only took until the second or third appearance of said Lego games before the gaming world began to sniff a rotter in their midst. An innocuous pile of formulaic Lego bricks with the added concentrate of whatever intellectual property was currently flavour of the month, was



If a boss simply will not die, the solution probably lies elsewhere.

failing to set the world on fire in quite the same way that our first exposure to the germinal idea at one time had.

All of this is a roundabout way of saying that finally, Traveller's Tales has made some huge concessions to originality, and we couldn't be happier that it is within the universe of *Harry Potter* that it has chosen to make these concessions. There is far more game here than you could rightfully expect for the money you'll be paying. Where *Star Wars* and *Indiana Jones* have offered us an entire trilogy, *Harry Potter: Years 1-4* goes one better and is essentially a quadrilogy whose component four parts will each take you the best part of forever to complete, and infinity to master.

Scenes from the films are strung into levels via the natural hub provided by Hogwarts. But it's not just the School Of Witchcraft And Wizardry which provides such apt material for gameplay integration. Multiple spells, potion-making and sampling, invisibility cloaks and much more besides all make an unscathed transition into the game, as does the usual selection of IP machinima with their

This moves away from dull button-mashing and places greater importance on devious puzzles

own comical take on classic scenes from the *Harry Potter* movies.

But it's the game's move away from dull, button-mashing combat and the greater importance it places on devious puzzling that provides *Harry Potter: Years 1-4* with its greatest strength. We were at times unsure of how to proceed, but contrary to the game's stylings and in contrast to the MO held up by increasingly facile modern gaming, *Lego Harry Potter* will not hold your hand. 'You work it out' it quite rightly says, and we had one hell of a lot of fun doing so.

Dan Howdle

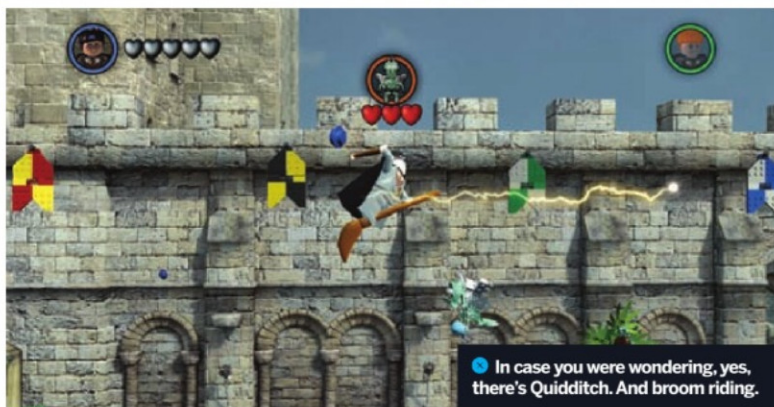
VERDICT

Perhaps in the halls of all-time great games, this slips between the cracks of the almighty flagstones supporting each gaming deity, but as a fun-packed *Harry Potter* aside, this is brilliant.

79%



Professor McGonagall is no less intimidating. Okay, a bit less maybe.



In case you were wondering, yes, there's Quidditch. And broom riding.

Or you could try



Harry Potter And The Half-Blood Prince Issue 182
The best *Potter* game not involving Lego. 60%

PS3

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Pure Football

Keeping you off the Streets



DETAILS

Publisher
Ubisoft
Developer
Ubisoft Vancouver
Price
£29.99
Players
1-4
Genre
Sports
Supports
720p, PlayStation Network, DualShock 3, Dolby Digital 5.1
Age Rating
3
Website
www.purefootballgame.com

It's been a while since a newcomer entered what has long been a two-game race in the football arena, and it's no surprise to discover that Ubisoft has chosen not to compete directly against the combined might of *FIFA* and *PES* with its first footy title on the PS3. Instead what we have here is a budget-priced, five-a-side, arcade-style take on the genre that takes advantage of the fact that EA seems to have abandoned *FIFA Street*, and indeed the entire EA Sports BIG brand, for the time being at least.

It has a very similar feel to *FIFA Street 3*, although the special moves aren't as spectacularly over the top and it implements a third-person, from-behind camera view for the most part, as opposed to the more familiar side-on camera. This serves to enhance the feeling of being involved in the action, and can make for some pretty cool views, but it also has its drawbacks. The main problem is that you can't see what's going on very clearly a lot of the time, partly because the camera likes to zoom in and out and zip about a lot, and partly because you never



You can't make the ball do that in FIFA or PES.

IKER CASILLAS
GOALKEEPER



get to see what's happening behind it. And the camera's not the only reason it can be hard to make sense of what you're looking at – the lighting and automated strip selection also cause issues. Even if the CPU doesn't decide that the two teams should wear near-identical strips, and it sometimes does, opposing players viewed from a distance can be hard to tell apart on some of the more atmospherically lit (ie darker) venues.

There are also some niggles with the controls, but *Pure Football* doesn't really have any flaws that you won't be able to get used to. It is very simplistic once you get the hang of it, mind you, although quite fun nonetheless, even in long sessions, thanks to a surprisingly addictive Campaign mode that sees you trying to assemble the ultimate five-a-side team by impressing increasingly skilled players by completing objectives that get more demanding accordingly. For example, recruiting a new



Pure Football clearly isn't focusing on reality.



Great for a quick footy session at half time, but not built for extensive play.

Competently put together and actually pretty well presented

striker might require you to score at least three goals in a match against his team, or to recruit a keeper you may need to make a penalty save during the match.

There's not much to it as a whole – you get 17 international squads and three legendary teams totalling 230 players – but what you do get is competently put together and actually pretty well presented. Not bad for less than 30 quid.

Gavin Mackenzie

VERDICT

If you want a light-hearted football fix during the summer season while you're waiting for the full season big guns in October, you could do a lot worse than *Pure Football*. It's cheap because it's shallow, not because it's bad.

69%



This isn't really a good likeness of Robert Green, he should have his head in his hands.



FIFA Street 3 Issue 163
Wackier than *Pure Football* but overall not quite as good. 66%

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Trinity Universe



DETAILS

Publisher
Tecmo Koei
Developer
Nippon Ichi
Price
£44.99
Players
1
Genre
JRPG
Supports
720p
Age Rating
TBC
Website
www.nisamerica.com/games/trinityuniverse

If the Mad Hatter played videogames...

The question that needs asking is 'how mad do you want it?' Because, despite over two decades of experience playing JRPGs, we've finally found a game which not only crosses the line between quirky, Eastern charm, it barrels on and doesn't stop until the player is pretty much convinced that they're better off in a padded cell. Seriously, the randomness on offer here makes *Alice In Wonderland* look like a party political broadcast on behalf of the Lucid Reality Party.

But, like so many in the genre, and unlike just as many more, the characters are simply excellent, even if the cut-scenes are presented like near-inanimate comic book cells. The voice acting is decent and the game has a great deal of content which could be described as 'breaking the fourth wall' – essentially, self-awareness of its nature as a videogame, or as an otaku-pleasuring curiosity. And despite its happy-clappy junior manga veneer, its



• Kiddies game? We thought so too, but look again.



• The Netherverse is a strange place. Maybe even too strange.



entire cast spend half their time swearing and commenting on the shapeliness of one another's lady lumps.

We were dreading this moment – the one where we have to describe where the game is set and how it works – because most of it defies any explanation at all. Here goes; you are Kanata, a Demon God King (or Dog King as he calls himself), a half-man, half-dog who is trapped in the Netherverse – a place in outer

We can understand why some people will enjoy this, but most will not

space where random objects float around town-sized islands. The objects, which can be anything from a traffic cone to a palace are bombarding the town, and your refusal to turn into a gem is apparently causing it. Kanata wants adventure, so he decides to bat each of these objects out of the Netherverse by conquering each of the dungeons contained within the objects. Make sense? No. Good, then you're exactly where we were after nine hours – welcome to our world.

It's cheerful, genuinely funny and with enough depth to last the *Disgaea* fan club until the day they die, but it's also an acquired taste; hideously boring for the most part with its remaining volume made up of pure J-nonsense. Actual dungeoneering is plagued by random battles, which in some games we're in favour of, but here, it's more often than not by very weak monsters who exist merely to grind said exploration to a halt rather than offer any actual challenge. Its battle system is engaging and deep, but then, isn't that cost of entry these days? We can understand why some people will enjoy this, but most will not. Only the super-JRPG-hardcore elite need apply.

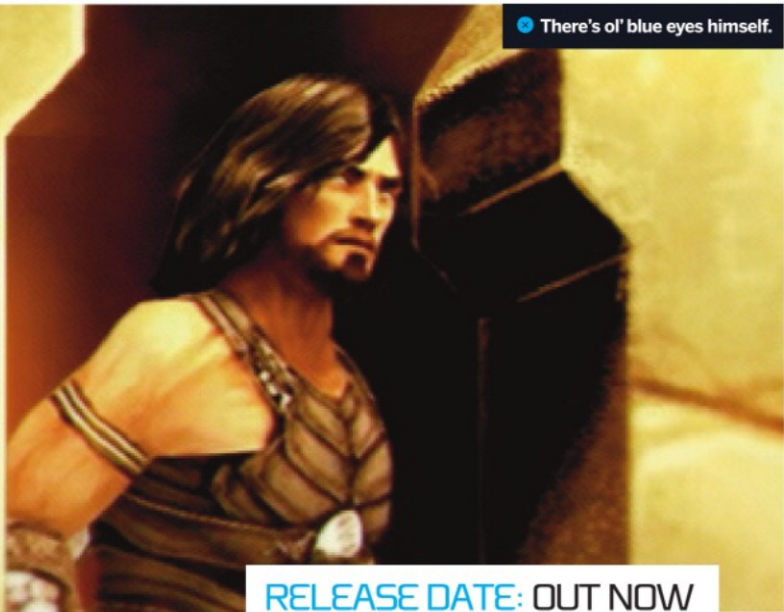
Dan Howdle

VERDICT

We're scoring it generously, despite the bizarre write-up. Simply put, the audience for which it was intended will enjoy it. Everyone else will hate it, though.


61%





There's of blue eyes himself.

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Set-distance jumps: not great.



Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands

Move along, nothing of interest here

DETAILS

Publisher
Ubisoft
Developer
Ubisoft Quebec
Price
£29.99
Players
1
Genre
Platformer
Supports
PS3 Link-up, TV In/Out
Age Rating
12
Website
www.princeofpersiagame.com

While the home console version of *The Forgotten Sands* aims to bring the series back to the glory days of *The Sands Of Time*, the PSP version is aimed at taking things even further back to the Prince's roots. A side-scrolling platformer with the hero as agile and acrobatic as he is in the other titles he stars in, players must battle through enemies, puzzles of timing and dexterity and clever use of magical powers to overcome all that stands in their way. This is all true, even if it does sound like a press release. The thing you should probably take into account on top of all this is the fact that *The Forgotten Sands* is a pointless waste of anyone's time.

It's another example, just like the bigger, slightly better PS3 version of *The Forgotten*

Sands (68%, **Play** 193) – simply making a game in the style of one from the past which was good does *not* mean this one will be. As a platformer it works, but only as a very basic, very simple, very straightforward experience – you spend most of your time holding right on the D-pad and pressing (X) to do a jump, which is always of a pre-determined distance. Nothing is left open to the player's input beyond initially making the Prince start the move – there's no experimentation or implementation of skill in anything you do. Very much like the PS3 version, you will either get it right or get it wrong. That's it. No 'just about', no fluking it – pass or fail, simple as. It's not a good element of design and makes the game far

more frustrating than it should be – limiting your ability to control the character in midair is something only *Ghouls 'N Ghosts* should do.

The now-standard POP puzzles come into play where the player is tasked with mucking about with time, controlling the

Another pointless feature in an utterly redundant game

flow of sand and other such things. It's fine, but that's about it. It does nothing more than become a part of the furniture, whether you're speeding up an enemy or slowing down some sand. Another pointless feature in an utterly redundant game.

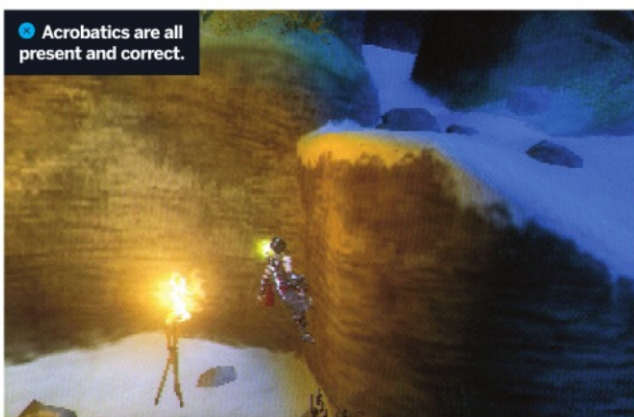
We've been increasingly vocal in our support of the PSP in recent months, but if games like this – 'specifically made for PSP, but still a bag of crap' – keep popping up we may have to rethink that standpoint.

Ian Dransfield

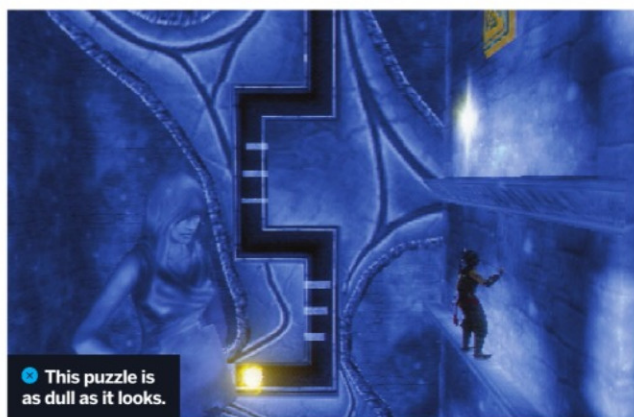
VERDICT

Harking back to past glories: fine. Making a game from the ground up for PSP: brilliant. It's just a shame *The Forgotten Sands* is so utterly bland, devoid of good ideas and is a complete waste of time.

52%



Acrobatics are all present and correct.



This puzzle is as dull as it looks.



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Ace Combat: Joint Assault



DETAILS

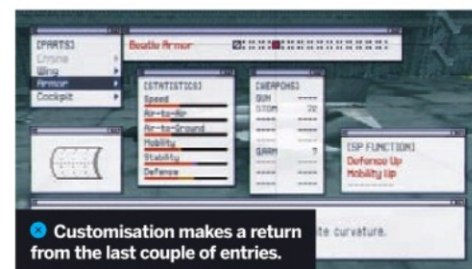
Publisher
Namco Bandai
Developer
Project Aces
Price
£29.99
Players
1-8
Genre
Flight sim
Supports
Ad-hoc Wi-Fi
Infrastructure Wi-Fi
Multiplayer, TV In/Out
Age Rating
12
Website
www.
namcobandai.com

Play it while humming the Hot Shots! theme tune

We can look at this two ways: one, it's a new *Ace Combat* game on PSP – a series we're fond of and one that goes all the way back to the very beginnings of PlayStation. It has improved multiplayer functionality over the last PSP game in the series, *Skies Of Deception*, and offers full four-player co-operative modes for most of the missions in the campaign. Or two: we only had one copy with which to review *Joint Assault*, and as such are missing out on the main draw for this new version in the series – co-operative missions, joint-strike action (players tackle separate missions, with efforts in each affecting the other) and up to eight players battling it out against each other. The secret third way of looking at it, though, is that there's more than enough game for just one person to get along with, so we need to stop whining for now.

Veterans of the *Ace Combat* series will know the drill by now, but for the uninitiated: this is a flight sim with more arcade leanings than you might expect. Rather than combat waged at a distance of

Here's a tip: two missiles are enough to take down most enemies



There's also the returning element of the story, and this is one part we do wish would take more of a back seat. It worked in *AC4: Distant Thunder*, but since then it's been nothing but boring and overwrought. Even setting it in the real world, meaning you'll be doing missions in Tokyo, Egypt and THE MIDDLE EAST™ does nothing for the tale. Just ignore the story, enjoy the rest.

Ian Dransfield

VERDICT

While we weren't able to play the game in in multiplayer, there's more than enough going on in *Joint Assault's* single-player to make it worth a bash. Just don't expect anything to surprise you.

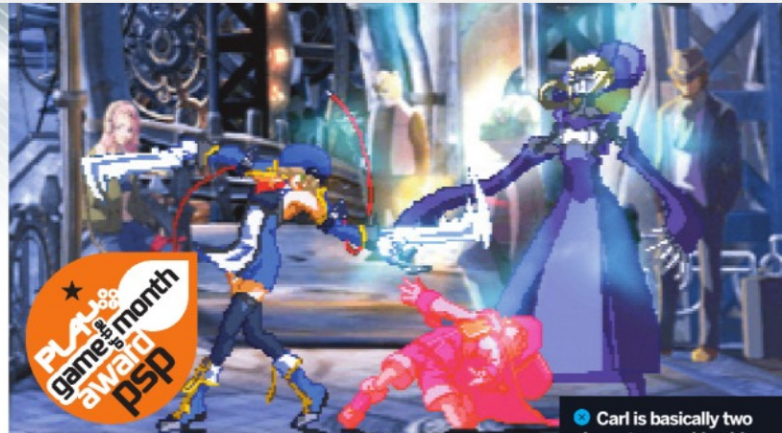
79%





DETAILS

Publisher
Zen United
Developer
Arc System Works
Price
TBC
Players
1-2
Genre
Beat-'em-up
Supports
Ad-hoc Wi-Fi
Multiplayer,
Infrastructure Wi-Fi
Multiplayer, TV In/Out
Age Rating
TBC
Website
www.blazblue.com



RELEASE DATE: TBC

Carl is basically two characters, making him rather irritating to fight.

BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger Portable

BlazBlue pulls the Trigger

With such a meagre word count available, it may seem churlish to waste any of that telling you what it is that's wrong with a game as wonderful as *BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger Portable* instead of simply singing its praises. But the reason for this is simple; we can fit the problems in half a page. If, on the other hand, you would like us to describe all its great features then, well, there's simply not enough room.

So here we go; the PSP screen is a little small to allow players to fully appreciate the intricately detailed hand-drawn animation. Sometimes

then, it can be a little hard to see what's going on, especially if both fighters are spamming their Distortion Drives. Likewise, the – naturally bonkers – story modes offer a level of fidelity we're describing as 'Mega Drive-ness'.

And that's it. Because outside of that, what we have here is a perfect conversion of 'the second best fighter of 2010'. One which has every frame of fighter animation intact, an additional RTS-like game mode known as Legion and perhaps the most impressive achievement of all; controls which feel completely natural, provided you use the D-pad



The 'chatting' sections of each story inevitably lead to a scrap, no matter what is said.

rather than the PSP's fiddlestick. Only *Tekken: Dark Resurrection* can claim superiority on the format and even then, only by a whisker.

Dan Howdle

VERDICT

A near-perfect port of a big brother who holds onto its superiority by a hair's breadth and only on account of the comparative limitations of both control and screen size inherent to the PSP format.

84%



DETAILS

Publisher
Codemasters
Developer
Trickstar Games
Price
£39.99
Players
2
Genre
Sports
Supports
720p, PlayStation
Network,
DualShock 3
Age Rating
3
Website
http://
playcricket2010.
com

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

International Cricket 2010

Apparently football isn't the only sport this summer

Yes, yes. World Cup fever is here and many couldn't care less about cricket. As is always the case every four years, however, there will be those stubborn few who purposely choose to ignore any and all interaction with The Beautiful Game, and it is to them that this review is directed.

It's dull and monotonous – and that's before the first ten overs are complete

And, truth be told, *International Cricket 2010* is bundled in such a mixed bag that even those who are interested should take a moment to consider their purchase. A clean-

yet-deep interface counters the PlayStation 2-era graphics and animations, and while the commentary does a decent job of narrating a match, the vague allusions to players and places are just stark reminders of how unlicensed the product is.

The detailed tutorial section of *International Cricket 2010* provides the technical knowledge for players to take control of a game, though its simplicity humours the player into believing that this knowledge can be sensibly applied. Once you get into the competitions proper, you'll find yourself resorting to the same



Once you've sussed the timing, batting becomes too easy.

batting/bowling technique over and over again (always to the right, always a straight ball). It's dull and monotonous – and that's before the first ten overs are complete.

Cricket is always going to be a hard sport to translate to videogames with the stop-start nature of proceedings, but this is not a game that manages to bridge that gap with a great deal of success. Certainly not unplayable, but nor is it nearly good enough to distract many from a certain global sporting event.

Adam Barnes

VERDICT

The underlying mechanics are so simple that any skill or tactical thinking is gone from the start, therefore lacking the most important factor to making a cricket game enjoyable to play.

61%



This is one of a few overused post-hit cut-scenes.



Bowling is a case of pressing two buttons and hoping it's not hit for six.



"The most rich, detailed, authentic and best Wild West game ever made" 92%



Red Dead Redemption

Once more they head back to the West

DETAILS

Publisher
Rockstar
Developer
Rockstar San Diego
Release Date
Out Now
Price
£49.99
Players
1-16
Genre
Sandbox
Supports
1080p, Downloadable content, Dolby Digital 5.1, Sixaxis, DualShock 3

If Westerns have always struck a chord with you there's a very strong chance that *Red Dead Redemption* will have had a similar effect. Crafting a cowboy-inspired landscape that was as unique as it was familiar, following John Marston on his epic journey brought with it moments that, for some, were genuinely outstanding. As ever, though, the narrative has to come to a close eventually and for those who want to get a bit more out of Rockstar's latest game, multiplayer is on hand.

Following the *Grand Theft Auto IV* layout just a tad, individuals with a competitive streak will instantly warm to modes such as Shootout, Grab The Bag, Hold Your Own and Goldrush, all variants of what we're used to in other games albeit with a *Red Dead Redemption* twist. With the setting, however, and the seemingly endless fun that is brought to the table thanks to Dead Eye – which loses its slow-motion advantage to ensure

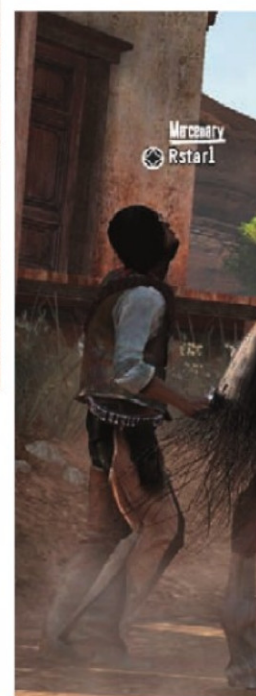
the playing field is fair – what's here is more than able to conjure up the necessary edge. The motivation to play better exists thanks to the always welcome ranking-up system and the extras that'll be handed your way as your success level increases; on occasion, games can be so tight the payoff for winning is also an overwhelming sense of satisfaction. With all the above said, the up-tempo pace can at times be *Red Dead Redemption*'s undoing. Jumping in and out of cover as a team of the PSN's hungriest cowboys bear down on you can often be quite frustrating as you struggle with the controls, which refuse to obey your every command. When every second counts, a slight internal tussle can see you lifeless on your back.

It's clear that such modes are not the online option's highlight, with the Free Roam mode standing tallest. Enabling you to form

a posse with eight friends and wander the land, there's something incredibly addictive and endearing about it, even if you decide to simply explore together. If an action-packed experience gets you more excited there's scope to go hunting, attack computer-controlled forts or even other human-based gangs that just so

For those who want to get a bit more out of Rockstar's latest game, the excellent multiplayer is on hand

happen to be travelling the outback. The world is so big and the choices at your disposal so vast there's scope here to merely meander around just taking in the scenery with a group of online friends. Admittedly this party has to be both committed to the Western and to *Red Dead Redemption* itself, but if you find yourself fitting the bill the opportunity to



online reviews

ミナル

それはどのようによかったか。



● Forming a posse with friends brings with it an odd sensation of making you feel exceptionally cool.



● Matches can quickly become intense and although at times the controls can be your main enemy, the potential reward is huge.

get lost within it in a whole different way is definitely possible.

Retaining its charm and enticing you to get lost in its environment in a very similar fashion as it does offline, *Red Dead Redemption* proves it has longevity and depth to spare. A love of the formula and setting is needed, but those who have already fallen for its appeal will be sold almost instantly.

Simon Miller

VERDICT

The balance of competitive and co-operative modes is excellent and the Wild West setting will entice individuals already enamoured with *Red Dead Redemption* even more. When events become intense frustration can at times set in, but overall the sensation is epic.

★★★★★

THE MAN WITH NO NAME

Become a legend of the West

TO GIVE YOU some sense of becoming a famous figure, every positive step you make in *Red Dead's* online world will come with a reward. It could be new weapons, challenges or it could improve your overall abilities. In a *Modern Warfare* fashion, when you reach level 50 you can even hit the reset button, although with a host of extras that prove how demanding your journey has been. To inject it with that Western feel a touch more, switch your focus to the competitive side of things and every match starts with a classic stand-off. As both teams line up, whoever has the quickest trigger finger will find the map and all its perks available for the taking before your foes respawn. It shakes things up and allows *Red Dead* to even out the carnage.

PSN Roundup

BLUR

Putting the fun back into racing

Publisher Activision Developer Bizarre Creations Price £49.99 Players 1-20 Genre Racing

Since day one, *Blur* has been pitched as a multiplayer-focused game. With Bizarre constantly mentioning the likes of Twitter and Facebook functionality, it was clear the emphasis was aimed at getting friends together. As nice as all these small touches are, it's the core game where things really shine. Getting 20 manic gamers into a race with access to weapons is so intense and insane that every contest usually ends up being a real adrenaline rush. With 'mods' and challenges à la *Modern Warfare*, there's also a constant incentive to try to not only win events, but perform specific actions.



It may be hitting a certain number of cars with a shunt or blocking numerous incoming attacks but it adds a nice layer of depth to an already fine racer. One that will last for some time. **SM** ★★★★★

UFC UNDISPUTED 2010

Four steps forward to take five steps back

Publisher THQ Developer Yuke's Price £49.99 Players 1-2 Genre Sports

There's no denying that *UFC 2010* has an excellent feature setup. From all the modes you'd expect to a few that will be accepted as welcome additions, it's the online fight camps where followers of the sport will be especially intrigued. Allowing you to set up your own gym, invite friends into it and then setting this team to compete against other fighters from other man-made clans, complete with logos, is so akin to what happens in real life you can't help but smile. Get a streak going and it's perfectly possible to get a reputation over the PSN as being the club to beat. Unfortunately, each fight is so susceptible



to lag – our experience saw a frustrating mixture of smooth and unplayable bouts – it's hard to give *UFC Undisputed 2010* the props it deserves. Here's hoping for a patch soon. **SM** ★★★★★

SPLIT/SECOND: VELOCITY

Does this blur past the finish?

Publisher Disney Developer Black Rock Studios Price £49.99 Players 1-8 Genre Racing

There's no getting away from the competition between *Blur* and *Split/Second: Velocity*. With both games trying to bring something different to the arcade racing genre, for many there's a choice to be made rather than throw their eggs into both baskets. Ultimately it comes down to which model suits you as a gamer best, but from *Split/Second: Velocity's* point of view, it's all about the thrill of the race. It's all well and good detonating a building against a lifeless AI, but achieve such lofty goals and crush your friend who's in first place and the sense of satisfaction is immense. With Elimination and Survival thrown in



for good measure, there's a lot here to keep you involved, especially when you start to get more familiar with the tracks. Whether it has *Blur's* depth is up for debate, though. **SM** ★★★★★

DETAILS

Publisher
Hello Games
Developer
In-House
Release Date
Out Now
Price
£9.99
Players
1
Genre
Racing

Joe Danger GAME A new standard for digital content

WE CAN'T GET enough of *Joe Danger*. When a game comes along that causes you to play the first stage over and over you know you're playing something special.

Created by the four-man team at Hello Games, the developer's first game is a staggering achievement. It's instantly accessible, has a great price point and, best of all, offers plenty of longevity.

Taking control of the titular Joe Danger, you initially appear to be playing a gaudy version of hit Xbox Live game *Trials HD*. Fear not, though, because those first glances are misleading. *Joe Danger* is a wonderful mishmash of new and classic games that, in addition to

borrowing ideas from *Trials HD*, also takes elements from *Kik-Start*, *Excite Bike* and many more classic titles to create one of the best PSN titles we've ever played.

Variety is the spice of life and *Joe Danger* has plenty. One minute you'll

be taking part in huge events that require you to complete a set amount of tasks, then you'll be racing against competitors, or collecting as many coins as possible within a strict time limit. Joe will even have to use himself as a bowling ball on some surreal stages.

It's all held together by a fantastic scoring system and ultra-silly bike physics that enable you to pull off all sorts of crazy tricks. Double-jumping, accelerating and even reversing in midair isn't an issue and when you couple it with an array of easy-to-use tricks – accessed by alternating between the **L1** and **R1** buttons – there's even more depth. Our first runthrough of Level 1 netted us 12,000-odd points; we're now easily clearing 140,000,000.

Add in a genuinely engaging main character, brilliantly designed stages, gorgeous visuals and a cool level editor and *Joe Danger* is quite frankly one of the best games currently available on Sony's digital download service.

Darran Jones

VERDICT

Full of charm and packed with variety, this is easily one of the best PSN games you can currently buy. **96%**



• If all the variety of *Joe Danger* wasn't enough there's even an excellent edit mode.

Sam & Max: The Devil's Playhouse Episodes 1 & 2 GAME

The dog and bunny duo finally hit the PS3

THIS IS SAM & Max's first outing on PS3 and it's a doozy. Be advised that you'll need to pay £20 up front that will then enable you to download each new monthly instalment.

The biggest improvement this new season of *Sam & Max* boasts – it will consist of five separate monthly episodes – is the new console-friendly controls that make controlling the outrageous pair incredibly easy. While you can still use the standard point-and-click method, the ability to simply



• You can't hear it here, but *The Penal Zone's* dialogue is amazingly funny.

DETAILS

Publisher
Electronic Arts
Developer
Visceral Games
Release Date
Out Now
Price
£7.99
Players
1-2
Genre
Third-person adventure

Dante's Inferno: The Trials Of St Lucia DLC Trials you'll want to go through

AFTER MONTHS OF disappointing DLC – *Dark Forest*, anyone? – Visceral Studios finally delivers some decent *Dante* content. Yes, you could certainly argue that *Dante's Inferno* could have done with a co-op feature right from the start, but that would have caused all sorts of problems as *Dante And St Lucia's Inferno* doesn't have the same ring to it.

Staying well away from the main story, *The Trials Of St Lucia* is an impressive level editor that is not only a joy to use, but also lets *Dante's Inferno's* combat finally come to the fore without the annoying niggles that would sometimes plague the main game.

Levels are created by simply choosing a selection of stages from the main game, then

populating them with a variety of different monsters. You can add variety by adding a selection of different traps and power-ups, determine the strength of creatures and



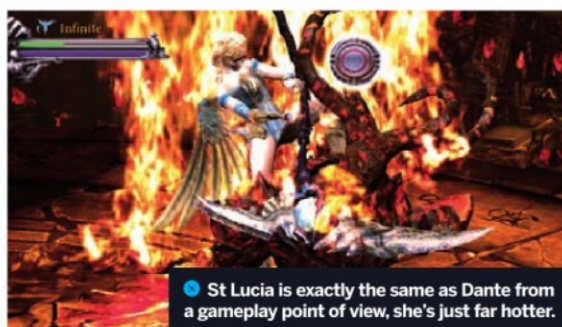
• The level editor is surprisingly robust giving you plenty of freedom as you create stages.

decide whether you want to allow for single-player or co-op trials.

St Lucia herself is pretty much a clone of Dante, in terms of her attack repertoire, but playing multiplayer is certainly good fun and adds plenty of longevity once the main game has been completed. It's something of a pity that it's impossible to play St Lucia in the main game, but this remains a solid piece of DLC that benefits greatly from being able to continually play the trials that are constantly uploaded online. **DJ**

VERDICT

It's a simple slash-'em-up at heart, but the clever level editor still makes this essential. ★★★★★



• St Lucia is exactly the same as Dante from a gameplay point of view, she's just far hotter.

Rocket Knight GAME

Up and away with Konami's new Sparkster game

ASIDE FROM SHOWING up every now and then in cameos, Konami's Sparkster has been largely absent from our gaming screens. Realising that the wily opossum was never a big enough star to justify a retail release, Konami has wisely entrusted Portsmouth-based Climax to continue his adventures digitally. The end result is a fun run-'n'-gun hybrid that, while not without its issues, proves that there is room in this gaming world for more ageing franchises.

Set many years after the last 16-bit game starring Sparkster, *Rocket Knight* is a surprisingly solid little title that's only really let down by poor pacing issues. Obviously designed more for a younger audience, Climax's new game is incredibly easy in places, so much so that boredom can soon set in during its first few stages. The opening levels offer little to no challenge, simply requiring you to get used to

Store Reviews

それはどのようによかったか。

Store Roundup

DETAILS

Publisher Telltale Games Developer In-House Release Date Out Now Price £19.99 Players 1 Genre Adventure

walk to whatever you want to interact with is very liberating and adds greatly to the game's appeal.

So far two episodes of *The Devil's Playhouse* have been released, *The Penal Zone* and *The Tomb Of Sammun-Mak*. Both are full of humour, feature increasingly inventive puzzles and prove that when it comes to point-and-click adventures, no one else currently comes close to the genius that is Telltale Games.

The Penal Zone is particularly clever as it starts off in the game's future and cleverly introduces you to Max's psychic powers. The madcap bunny can do everything from transform into everyday objects to reading people's minds and as the story progresses you'll have to constantly use them in inventive ways. Add in great characterisation and plenty of laugh-out-loud moments and *The Penal Zone* is a great start to the season.



• *The Devil's Playhouse* is the best that Sam & Max has ever looked.

The Tomb Of Sammun-Mak is even better thanks to far cleverer puzzles that involve much time travelling, even stronger dialogue and a smattering of amusing new additions to the ever-growing character roster. If the rest of the series can match this high standard we could be looking at one of the greatest adventure games of all time. **DJ**

VERDICT

Sam & Max's new escapade is off to a cracking start. Let's hope it continues.

The Penal Zone **90%** The Tomb Of Sammun-Mak **92%**

DETAILS

Publisher Konami Developer Climax Price £9.99 Released Out Now Players 1 Genre Arcade



• The first boss is a real git to defeat. Tread carefully or you'll be sorry.

Sparkster's handy jetpack and sword attacks. It's all a little too by the numbers until you eventually reach the game's first boss. He's a rude wake-up call due to the difficulty level suddenly ramping up and he'll cause much swearing and frustration until you've finally sussed out all his devious attack patterns.

Fortunately, *Rocket Knight* picks up admirably after its first few stages and you'll soon be impressed by clever new play mechanics – snow worlds, for

example, ensure that your rocket fuel won't automatically renew – that add greatly to the on-screen action. The difficulty level still suffers, particularly on boss fights, but the end result is a fun release that proves to be a worthy sequel to the original 16-bit games. **DJ**

VERDICT

It's not the dazzling return to form we were hoping for, but *Rocket Knight* remains good fun. **74%**

ANARCHY: RUSH HOUR GAME

Burnout on a budget

Publisher Sony Online Entertainment Developer: Gaijin Entertainment Price: £7.99 Players: 1-8 Genre: Racing

DO YOU REALLY need more motor mayhem with *Split/Second* and *Blur* already available? In the case of *Anarchy: Rush Hour* the answer is yes.

It lacks polish, but for a fiver you get a cross between *Burnout* and *Midnight Club*. It has a multiplayer mode for up to eight players, a variety of different gameplay modes and an excellent customisation mode. It's all been done better before, but there's no arguing with its price point. **73%**



HAMSTERBALL GAME

Super Monkey Ball but ten years late

Publisher: TikGames Developer: In-House Price: £7.99 Players: 1-7 Genre: Racing

HAMSTERBALL IS JUST *Super Monkey Ball* on a budget. The visuals are average, the multiplayer mode is nowhere near as expansive or fun, while the level design itself can't compete with the standards set by Sega. Having said all that, *Hamsterball* is still a thoroughly entertaining game thanks to the sheer variety that's on offer and the fact that the concept – while a decade late – remains utterly brilliant fun. It's a little pricey, but fans of *Monkey Ball* will be more than happy with this digital substitute. **72%**



NIER: THE WORLD OF RECYCLED VESSEL DLC

Recycled is appropriate. Just bin this

Publisher: Square Enix Developer: Cavia Price: £4.99 Players: 1 Genre: Action Adventure

WE EXPECT A lot nowadays for £5 of digital content. What we

don't expect is three poor weapons, two costume sets and 15 challenge rooms that, while admittedly challenging, are also extremely unexciting to play. There's also the concern that this came out almost immediately after *Nier*'s release, making you wonder why it wasn't included in the first place. Even the most ardent of *Nier* fans will be disappointed by what's on offer here. ★★★★★



KICK-ASS THE GAME GAME

Does it kick ass? Sort of

Publisher: WHA Entertainment Developer: Frozen Codebase Price: £9.99 Players: 1-2 Genre: Beat-'em-up

NOW HERE'S A guilty little pleasure. *Kick-Ass* is £4 too expensive,

gets incredibly repetitive and is ugly as sin and yet we've still been enjoying it. Maybe it's the fun presentation that splices live action from the film with excerpts from the comic, or it could be down to the copious profanities, but it makes us smile. A two-player button masher with overly simplistic combat and level design, *Kick-Ass* is nevertheless good fun while playing with a friend. If only it wasn't so highly priced. **60%**



SPLIT/SECOND: MASTER UNLOCK! DLC

Great fun, but not really essential

Publisher: Disney Interactive Studios Developer: Black Rock Studio Price: £3.99 Players: 1-10 Genre: Racing

WE'RE ALWAYS WARY of DLC that lets you unlock everything from the start, as it seems like cheating. It also typically costs more than a fiver to get all the good stuff right at the start.

Disney at least allows you to access all the cards and tracks from the season mode for just £4, instantly allowing you to compete against the best online without having to dedicate hours to the single-player mode. Not essential, but decently priced all the same. ★★★★★



PUZZLE CHRONICLES GAME

A Puzzle Quest stopgap

Publisher: Konami Developer: Infinitive Interactive Price: £6.29 Players: 1-2 Genre: Puzzle/RPG

LOOK BEYOND PUZZLE *Chronicles'* ugly visuals and you'll find

a fun game. Despite the familiar fantasy setting the combat is vastly different. You still match gems, but there's now an on-screen grid shared between you and your opponent, with the idea being to match gems so you diminish your opponent's playing area and finally defeat them.

Puzzle Chronicles should serve as a decent diversion until *Puzzle Quest's* true sequel turns up. **70%**





● We certainly won't want to follow this guy down the rabbit hole.



DETAILS

Price
£24.99
Sound
DTS-HD MA 5.1
Director
Richard Kelly
Starring
Jake Gyllenhaal,
Maggie Gyllenhaal,
Patrick Swayze

Donnie Darko

Richard Kelly's best film finally hits Blu-ray

With Jake Gyllenhaal currently turning heads as the Prince Of Persia, this timely release proves why he's now climbing the Hollywood A-list. A lot has changed since *Donnie Darko* was first released in 2001. Seth Rogen, who had a minor role as a bully, has become – for better or worse – one of the biggest comedic names in Hollywood, Patrick Swayze has sadly passed away, Blu-ray is now a video format to be reckoned with and Richard Kelly hasn't made anything that's

– the soundtrack alone is to die for – family drama and science fiction, as Donnie begins to realise his place in the world and what he must do in order to prevent disaster.

It's a masterful juggling of genres that leaves the audience pondering long after the final frame has finished. Time travel is always a nightmare, and yet, somehow, Kelly is able to pull it all together, with hardly any hiccups. It's all backed up by a strong supporting cast, including Swayze as a self-help consultant with a sinister secret and Gyllenhaal's own sister Maggie as his elder on-screen sister.

Considering the cult status of the film and the impact it still has it's a pity that this isn't the definitive version, at least from a presentation point of view. The picture is pretty average, with the many dark scenes from the film doing it no favours at all. Of course, its low-budget roots meant that it was never going to be as vibrant as something like *Avatar* or *Up*, and it's obviously leagues ahead of the DVD version, but this is hardly a cutting-edge transfer. Audio, on the other hand, is much better, with

It's leagues ahead of the DVD version, but this is hardly a cutting-edge transfer

come anywhere close to the brilliance of his auspicious debut.

Gyllenhaal plays the titular Donnie Darko, a troubled loner who has therapy sessions, routinely fights with his parents and siblings, has part of an aircraft fall on his house and begins getting visits from a rabbit called Frank who warns Donnie that the world is going to end. What follows is an amazing blend of teenage angst, Eighties nostalgia



● Watch a young Prince Of Persia earning his acting crown.

speech always perfectly prioritised and the Eighties soundtrack sounding superb.

Where *Donnie Darko* does shine is in its extras. There's an in-depth, extremely insightful commentary from Kelly, another commentary with Kelly and friend Kevin Smith and a third commentary that features the entire cast and crew. If that's not enough there's a selection of trailers, additional scenes and featurettes. Add in the fact that this Blu-ray contains both the director's cut and the original theatrical cut and *Donnie Darko*'s Blu-ray outing remains a triumph that every fan will want to own.

Darran Jones

VERDICT

The picture disappoints, but the extras and two alternate cuts more than make up for it. Add in the fact that *Donnie Darko* is a defining film from the last decade and this is a must-have.

RATING: ★★★★★

Plus all
the latest
hardware
reviews

Blu-ray Reviews

それはどのようによかったか。

Competition

Shutter Island

PRICE: £26.99
SOUND: DTS-HD MA 5.1
DIRECTOR: Martin Scorsese
STARRING: Leonardo DiCaprio, Ben Kingsley



SHUTTER ISLAND HAD mixed reviews – possibly because it wasn't what people expected from Scorsese. Fortunately, Blu-ray is the perfect place to watch the twisty turny plot unfold, and the high-quality transfer makes *Shutter Island* look even more foreboding. A strong thriller.

RATING: ★★★★★

Clash Of The Titans

PRICE: £26.99
SOUND: DTS-HD MA 5.1
DIRECTOR: Louis Leterrier
STARRING: Sam Worthington, Ralph Fiennes



THE GOOD NEWS is that *Clash Of The Titans* is much better than the original 1981 flick. The bad news is it's still a big, dumb popcorn movie. The effects are impressive in places and there's plenty of opportunity for the likes of Fiennes and Neeson to chomp up the scenery, but *Clash Of The Titans* remains pretty average stuff.

RATING: ★★★★★

Percy Jackson & The Olympians: The Lightning Thief

PRICE: £27.99
SOUND: DTS-HD MA 5.1
DIRECTOR: Chris Columbus
STARRING: Logan Lerman, Pierce Brosnan, Sean Bean, Uma Thurman

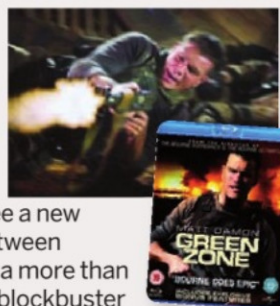


PERCY JACKSON'S FIRST adventure is good fun. Columbus directs the young main cast with ease and is more than adept at handling its big action scenes. Add in an excellent supporting cast and a strong transfer and the end result is very decent disc.

RATING: ★★★★★

Green Zone

PRICE: £24.99
SOUND: DTS-HD MA 5.1
DIRECTOR: Paul Greengrass
STARRING: Matt Damon, Greg Kinnear, Amy Ryan



WHILE WE'RE UNLIKELY to see a new Jason Bourne collaboration between Greengrass and Damon, this is a more than fitting substitute from them. A blockbuster with a brain, *Green Zone* sees Damon's Roy Miller looking for WMDs in Iraq. It's a bit talky at times, but it still packs plenty of action among the drawn-out dialogue.

RATING: ★★★★★

Bad Boys

PRICE: £19.99
SOUND: Dolby TrueHD 5.1
DIRECTORS: Michael Bay
STARRING: Will Smith, Martin Lawrence, Tea Leoni



TIME HASN'T BEEN kind to *Bad Boys*. Despite featuring one of the only decent on-screen performance of Martin Lawrence's career, it's just amazingly average to sit through now. Full of clichés, only some genuinely decent action scenes and the tight humour between Smith and Lawrence manage to make it an enjoyable romp.

RATING: ★★★★★

Exam

PRICE: £22.99
SOUND: Dolby TrueHD 5.1
DIRECTOR: Stuart Hazeldine
STARRING: Colin Salmon, Jimi Mistry, Luke Mably



THIS LOW-BUDGET British thriller examines how far you'd be prepared to go to get the ultimate job. Eight candidates sit an exam only to find the paper is blank, what follows is a tense psychological thriller full of nail-biting moments and clever twists. It's also a decent Blu-ray thanks to a good transfer and some interesting extras.

RATING: ★★★★★



KARATE KID COMP!

Win a Blu-ray player and Karate Kid movies

TruffleShuffle.com

MOVIE MAKERS HAVE been very busy lately revisiting Eighties gems and giving them a brand-new spin, such as the new *Karate Kid* movie starring Jaden Smith. But can these new films really recapture that nostalgia? Given the fact they have rocketed to the top of the box office charts perhaps they can. Nevertheless, if you want to remind yourself of the source material then Sony is offering you the chance to watch the first two *Karate Kid* movies on Blu-ray so the sounds and sights will be even better than the first time around – so you can watch Daniel deliver that Crane kick in stunning HD.

To celebrate the release of *Karate Kid I* and *II* on Blu-ray, Sony Pictures Home Entertainment is giving **Play** readers the chance to win a Blu-ray player, a copy of both movies and an amazing retro-themed T-shirt that can be found at www.trufflesuffle.com. Four runners-up will receive a copy of the movies and a T-shirt.

To be in with a chance of winning just answer this simple question:

In the Karate Kid movies who was Daniel LaRusso's mentor?

- A) Mr Magoo
- B) Mr Ben
- C) Mr Miyagi

If you are not one of the lucky winners you can still grab yourself a copy of *Karate Kid I* and *II* on Blu-ray when they are released on the 19 July courtesy of Sony Pictures Home Entertainment.

Terms And Conditions

To submit your answer, simply email play@imagine-publishing.co.uk with the subject line 'Karate Kid competition'. The closing date for entries is 5 August 2010. Please be aware that answers must be submitted to the above email address only, and any left through the comments section of this website will be automatically disqualified.

This competition is open to residents of the United Kingdom and Ireland. Imagine Publishing has the right to substitute the prize for a similar item of equal or higher value. Employees of Imagine Publishing (including freelancers), their relatives, or any agents are not eligible to enter. The editor's decision is final, and no correspondence will be entered into. Prizes cannot be exchanged for cash. Full terms and conditions are available upon request. From time to time, Imagine Publishing or its agents may send you related material or special offers. If you do not want to receive this, please state it clearly on your competition entry.

HD Reviews TVs and media systems that'll make your home entertainment come to life



Toshiba Regza 32RV635DB
PRICE: £380

WHILE FAR OLDER than Sony's new model, this is nevertheless a great TV at a very good price point. In addition to offering full 1080p, Toshiba's TV has built-in Freeview, a handy swivel stand, a useful Game Mode and deceptively powerful speakers. While it lacks the punch of Sony's offering it is far cheaper. ★★★★★



Samsung LE32C530
PRICE: £340

SAMSUNG'S NEW TV boasts plenty of great features and a bargain basement price. It offers full 1080p, has built-in Freeview, a handy USB port for showing off pictures, three HDMI ports, and a nice razor-sharp image. 50Hz means this isn't as smooth as other TVs, but you can't really argue with the excellent price point. ★★★★★



Sony BRAVIA KDL32EX503U
PRICE: £619

YOU CAN'T GO wrong with a BRAVIA and this new 32-inch offering from Sony is perfect if you want a bedroom TV. Its size is ample for playing games on, it's got Wi-Fi support, the ability to go online and 100Hz 'Motionflow' for silky-smooth visuals. A solid TV at a decent price. ★★★★★

PLAY#x PlayList

If you want to know what a game scored then these pages are for you



www.powerplaydirect.com
Bringing Power to your Play!

FIGHT! Tiger Woods vs Shigeki Maruyama

It's EA against Clap Hanz in the battle of golf-mascot dominance



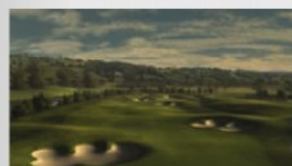
Round One: Fashion

They're both pro golfers which means that neither can win as both dress in such dull styles. If it was a different *Everybody's Golf* character the story would be different.
Score: 0-0



Round Two: Nicknames

This is tough, as Tiger's nickname is Tiger, which is cool. Shigeki's nickname, though, is the Smiling Assassin, which is also very cool. Shigeki's is slightly cooler, though.
Score: 0-1



Round Three: Super Skills

Tiger's good at starring in ads and having domestic issues. Shigeki, though, has a B rating for power and A for control. His Super Skills aren't *that* super, but at least they're golf-related.
Score: 0-2



Verdict: Shigeki wins!

Sorry Tiger – you play a good game of golf, but you're edged out by the fact that we don't know as much about Shigeki. Therefore he's more of a novelty, and more likely to win. We'll leave it up to you to decide which game is better, though.

PS3 LISTING

game	issue	score
3D Dot Game Heroes	192	87%
50 Cent: Blood On The Sand	177	70%
Afro Samurai	177	61%
Agarest: Generations Of War	187	78%
Alpha Protocol	193	83%
Aliens Vs Predator	189	79%
Alone In The Dark	173	70%
Armored Core For Answer	173	65%
Armored Core 4	153	67%
Army Of Two	164	80%
Army Of Two: The 40th Day	188	65%
Ashes Cricket 2009	183	30%
Assassin's Creed	161	58%
Assassin's Creed II	186	89%
Backbreaker	193	70%
Band Hero	187	68%
Batman: Arkham Asylum	183	85%
Battle Fantasia	176	67%
Battlefield: Bad Company	168	78%
Battlefield: Bad Company 2	190	93%
Bayonetta*	187	93%
Beijing 2008	168	54%
Beowulf	161	61%
Bionic Commando	179	82%
BioShock	172	93%
BioShock 2	189	88%
BlackSite	163	43%
Bladestorm: The Hundred Years' War	160	58%
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger	190	85%
Blazing Angels	151	54%
Blitz: The League II	172	67%
Blur	193	86%
Borderlands	185	80%
Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway	171	75%
Brütal Legend	185	79%
Burnout Paradise	162	74%
Buzz!: Quiz TV	168	82%
Buzz!: Quiz World	185	70%
Call Of Duty 3	151	77%
Call Of Duty: World At War	173	68%
Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare	160	88%
Call Of Juarez: Bound In Blood	181	85%
Chronicles Of Riddick: Assault On Dark Athena	178	87%
Civilization Revolution	168	90%
Clash Of The Titans	193	65%
Clive Barker's Jericho	159	84%
Colin McRae: DiRT	158	91%
Colin McRae: DiRT 2	184	87%
Command & Conquer: Red Alert 3	178	65%
Conan	160	71%
Condemned 2	165	78%
Conflict: Denied Ops	164	50%
Cross Edge	182	59%
Damnation	181	38%
Dante's Inferno	189	80%
Dark Sector	165	62%



game	issue	score
Dark Void	188	81%
Darksiders	188	83%
Dead Space	172	87%
Dead To Rights: Retribution	192	68%
Demon's Souls	193	92%
Def Jam: Icon	151	79%
Destroy All Humans!: Path Of The Furon	178	29%
Devil May Cry 4	163	89%
Disgaea 3: Absence Of Justice	175	81%
DJ Hero	186	91%
Dragon Age: Origins	186	82%
Dragon Ball: Raging Blast	186	40%
Dragon Ball Z: Burst Limit	168	61%
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam	160	40%
Dynasty Warriors Gundam 2	176	43%
Dynasty Warriors: Strikeforce	189	37%
Dynasty Warriors 6	164	30%
Dynasty Warriors 6: Empires	181	44%
Eat Lead	178	38%
Enchanted Arms	152	69%
Enemy Territory: Quake Wars	168	60%
Eternal Sonata	176	87%
Everybody's Golf 5*	158	88%
Everybody's Golf: World Tour	165	91%
Eye Of Judgment	159	65%
EyePet	185	83%
FaceBreaker	170	55%
Fairytale Fights	186	51%
Fallout 3	173	97%
Fantastic Four: Rise Of The Silver Surfer	155	39%
Far Cry 2	172	74%
F.E.A.R.	151	81%
F.E.A.R. 2: Project Origin	176	87%
FIFA 08	159	84%
FIFA 09	171	87%
FIFA 10	184	90%
FIFA Street 3	163	66%
FIFA World Cup 2010	192	70%
Fight Night Round 3	151	87%
Fight Night Round 4	181	84%
Final Fantasy XIII	190	85%
Folklore	158	66%
Formula One Championship Edition	151	72%
Fracture	171	72%
Fuel	180	49%
Full Auto 2: Battlelines	151	69%
G-Force	183	59%
Genji: Days Of The Blade	151	38%
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	157	83%
Ghostbusters: The Videogame	180	80%
GI Joe	183	22%
God Of War Collection*	188	93%
God Of War III	190	88%
Gran Turismo 5 Prologue	165	75%
Grand Theft Auto IV	166	98%
GTA: Episodes From Liberty City	191	94%



As good as it was when we reviewed it on import, but with a better translation and it's also available here. One of PS3's best games.



Fallout 3 lives up to its promise and then some. It's a damning portrayal of the consequences of war, and a compelling RPG experience.



The best football game made marginally better. The crown held by PES seems like so long ago now.

game	issue	score
Guitar Hero III	160	90%
Guitar Hero 5	184	81%
Guitar Hero: Aerosmith	168	63%
Guitar Hero Greatest Hits	182	76%
Guitar Hero Metallica	179	88%
Guitar Hero: Van Halen	189	65%
Guitar Hero World Tour	173	95%
Harry Potter And The Half-Blood Prince	182	60%
Harry Potter: The Order Of The Phoenix	155	32%
Haze	167	64%
Heavenly Sword	157	71%
Heavy Rain	189	94%
Heroes Over Europe	184	48%
Ice Age 3: Dawn Of The Dinosaurs	182	47%
IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds Of Prey	183	72%
inFamous	180	81%
Iron Man	166	58%
Iron Man 2	193	50%
Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier	187	59%
James Cameron's Avatar: The Game	187	64%
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	159	78%
Just Cause 2	190	87%
Kane & Lynch: Dead Men	160	73%
Katamari Forever	184	88%
Killzone 2	176	93%
Lair	158	52%
Last Rebellion	191	42%
Legend Of Spyro: Dawn Of The Dragon	174	54%
Legendary	173	62%
Lego Batman	173	65%
Lego Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures	167	73%
Lego Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues	187	71%
Lego Rock Band	187	75%
Lego Star Wars: The Complete Saga	160	76%
Leisure Suit Larry: Box Office Bust	180	24%
LittleBigPlanet	172	94%
Lost Planet 2	192	75%
Lost Planet: Extreme Condition	163	69%
Lost: The Video Game	164	38%
LOTR: Conquest	175	52%
Madden NFL 07	151	82%
Madden NFL 08	157	82%
Madden NFL 09	170	83%
Madden NFL 10	184	82%
MAG	189	68%
Marvel Ultimate Alliance	151	64%
Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2	185	57%
Medal Of Honor Airborne	161	85%
Mercenaries 2: World In Flames	171	78%
Metal Gear Solid 4	167	92%
Mobile Suit Gundam: Crossfire	151	37%
Modern Warfare 2	186	94%
Midnight Club: Los Angeles	173	84%



World Tour just about manages to trump rival Rock Band with its entertaining music-creation tools, and quality peripherals.



Sony has proven that it has a PlayStation platform capable of supporting a truly world-class FPS. Best graphics ever.



Create, share and play. Sackboy heads up Media Molecule's highly customisable and adorable platformer.



Not the final Metal Gear Solid game after all then. Still brilliant though, and still largely incomprehensible.






A questionable single-player mode is rendered null and void by the best multiplayer we've ever played.









This month's new entries


The newest games, freshly squeezed among all your old favourites

Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	PS3	68%
Alpha Protocol	PS3	83%
UFC Undisputed 2010	PS3	88%
Blur	PS3	86%
Red Dead Redemption	PS3	92%
Yakuza 4*	PS3	75%
Demon's Souls	PS3	92%
Iron Man 2	PS3	50%
Clash Of The Titans	PS3	65%
SBK X: Superbike World Championship	PS3	67%
Backbreaker	PS3	70%

Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker	PSP	92%
ModNation Racers	PSP	70%
FIFA World Cup 2010	PSP	65%
After Burner Climax	PSN	91%
Final Fight: Double Impact	PSN	90%
Blue Toad Murder Files Episodes 4/5/6	PSN	70%
Aqua Panic	PSN	68%
Namco Museum Essentials	PSN	60%
Section 8	PSN	78%
Lead & Gold: Gangs Of The Wild West	PSN	65%

game	issue	score
Mini Ninjas	184	80%
Mirror's Edge	173	71%
ModNation Racers	192	90%
Monster Madness	170	78%
Mortal Kombat vs DC Universe	173	68%
MotoGP 08	172	65%
MotoGP 09/10	190	77%
MotorStorm	151	92%
MotorStorm: Pacific Rift	172	93%
 With its balls strapped firmly to the wall, Pacific Rift amplifies the drama of the original to create the PS3's best racing title.		
MX Vs ATV Reflex	189	68%
MX Vs ATV Untamed	164	58%
Naruto: Ultimate Ninja Storm	174	59%
NASCAR 08	157	38%
NBA 07	153	33%
NBA 2K7	151	76%
NBA 2K8	172	71%
NBA 2K10	186	79%
NBA Live 08	158	59%
NBA Live 09	170	81%
NBA Street: Homecourt	151	68%
Need For Speed Carbon	151	76%
Need For Speed ProStreet	161	86%
Need For Speed Shift	184	81%
Need For Speed Undercover	173	75%
Nier	192	54%
NHL 2K7	151	80%
NHL 2K9	172	67%
NHL 2K10	186	70%
NHL 09	170	88%
NHL 10	184	85%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma	154	88%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2	184	82%
Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising	185	78%
Overlord: Raising Hell	167	65%
Overlord II	181	68%
Pain	183	69%
PES 2008	159	70%
PES 2009	172	80%
PES 2010	185	72%
PixelJunk Racers	160	74%
POTC: At World's End	154	48%
Prince Of Persia	174	83%
Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	193	68%
Prison Break: The Conspiracy	191	40%
Prototype	181	76%
Pure	171	80%
Quantum Of Solace	175	57%
Race Driver: GRID	167	85%
Rainbow Six Vegas	155	88%
Rainbow Six Vegas 2	164	78%
Ratchet & Clank: A Crack In Time	186	82%
Ratchet & Clank: Tools Of Destruction	160	72%
Red Dead Redemption	193	92%
 Relocates the familiar GTA formula to a superbly realised new setting and, in many ways, is unlike anything else as a result.		
Red Faction: Guerrilla	180	80%
Resident Evil 5	177	86%
Resident Evil 5: Gold Edition	190	86%
Resistance: Fall Of Man	151	83%
Resistance 2	173	90%
 With its impressive set pieces and glorious multiplayer mode, Resistance 2 is one of the best FPSs on the PS3.		
Resonance Of Fate	191	79%

game	issue	score
Ridge Racer 7	151	75%
Rise Of The Argonauts	176	58%
Rock Band	169	94%
Rock Band 2	179	96%
 With the incredible tracklist, tweaked engine, and new modes, this is easily the best rhythm-action game currently available.		
Rogue Warrior	188	09%
Sacred 2: Fallen Angel	180	76%
Saints Row 2	172	79%
Saw	186	52%
Sega Mega Drive Ultimate Collection	177	85%
SBK 08	172	55%
SBK X: Superbike World Championship	193	67%
Sega Rally	158	92%
 Simply the best rally game on the PS3. Unless simulation is your bag then you'll want to go for Colin McRae. Not much in it, really.		
Sega Superstars Tennis	165	68%
Shaun White Snowboarding	173	72%
Shellshock 2: Blood Trails	177	32%
Silent Hill: Homecoming	174	64%
Simpsons Game	160	82%
SingStar	159	80%
SingStar Pop Edition	179	81%
Skate	159	86%
Skate 2	175	82%
Skate 3	192	86%
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	190	78%
Sonic The Hedgehog	151	52%
Sonic Unleashed	175	48%
Soul Calibur IV	169	94%
 Even the gimmicky appearance of Darth Vader can't spoil Soul Calibur IV. Another wonderful addition to the franchise.		
Spider-Man 3	155	33%
Spider-Man: Web Of Shadows	173	55%
Splinter Cell Double Agent	153	79%
Split/Second: Velocity	192	90%
Star Ocean: The Last Hope International	190	63%
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed	171	65%
Stormrise	178	51%
Stranglehold	159	65%
Street Fighter IV	176	95%
 The best beat-'em-up on the PS3, probably the best beat-'em-up ever, and maybe even the best game ever. Our poor little thumbs.		
Stuntman: Ignition	157	82%
SuperCar Challenge	183	66%
Superstars V8: Next Challenge	190	55%
Superstars V8 Racing	181	63%
Super Street Fighter IV	191	90%
 The fact that you're buying a lot of stuff you've probably bought already is the only drawback to what is the best fighter ever made.		
Tekken 6	184	94%
 There are flaws that hurt the experience, but nothing, nothing, stops Tekken 6 from being an intense, tactical and brilliant fighting game.		
The Beatles: Rock Band	184	96%
 It's a gorgeous game that'll make Beatles fans feel like they're being swaddled in a veil of pure joy. A breathtaking product.		
The Bourne Conspiracy	168	72%
The Club	163	80%
The Darkness	154	91%
The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion	152	91%
 This proves once and for all that Western RPGs are better than Japanese ones! Sort of. Whatever, Oblivion is an awesome game.		

game	issue	score
The Godfather	151	37%
The Godfather II	178	38%
The Golden Compass	162	32%
The Incredible Hulk	168	52%
The King Of Fighters XII	182	82%
The Orange Box	161	93%
 Five brilliant games for the price of one, what on Earth could be better than that? Nothing, that's what. Absolutely nothing.		
The Saboteur	187	67%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07	151	88%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 08	158	73%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 09	171	86%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 10	181	69%
Time Crisis 4	166	69%
TimeShift	162	72%
TNA Impact!	171	71%
Tom Clancy's EndWar	173	80%
Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X	177	75%
Tomb Raider: Underworld	173	83%
Tony Hawk's Project 8	151	85%
Tony Hawk's Proving Ground	160	72%
Tony Hawk: Ride	188	52%
Top Spin 3	168	71%
Tornado Outbreak	186	56%
Transformers: Revenge Of The Fallen	182	41%
Transformers: The Game	156	34%
Turning Point: Fall Of Liberty	165	40%
Turok	163	46%
UEFA EURO 2008	165	62%
UFC Undisputed 2009	180	90%
UFC Undisputed 2010	193	88%
Uncharted: Drake's Fortune	161	87%
Uncharted 2: Among Thieves	185	96%
 Among Thieves has proven itself to be a real work of class. It's one of the best games in recent years.		
Unreal Tournament III	162	88%
Untold Legends: Dark Kingdom	151	54%
Valkyria Chronicles	173	82%
Vancouver 2010	189	76%
Viking: Battle For Asgard	165	74%
Virtua Fighter 5	151	83%
Virtua Tennis 2009	180	80%
Virtua Tennis 3	150	91%
 Pick-up-and-play gameplay strikes another blow, proving that the PS3 is currently at its best when it keeps it simple.		
Wanted: Weapons Of Fate	179	63%
Warhawk	157	84%
Watchmen: The End Is Nigh	183	55%
Way Of The Samurai 3	190	16%
Wet	184	41%
Wheelman	178	72%
Where The Wild Things Are	188	56%
White Knight Chronicles	190	55%
Wolfenstein	183	72%
World Snooker Championship 2007	151	56%
WSC REAL 09: World Snooker Championship	177	67%
WWE Legends Of Wrestlemania	178	80%
WWE SmackDown Vs. Raw 2008	159	88%
WWE SmackDown Vs. Raw 2009	173	74%
WWE SmackDown Vs. Raw 2010	185	77%
X-Blades	178	54%
X-Men Origins: Wolverine	179	71%
Yakuza 3	191	80%
Yakuza 4*	193	75%

*denotes import review

THIS MONTH IN PLAY



Issue 79, July 2001

THE NEWS OF the month was as hopeful as you would expect in a pre-9/11 world. We claimed the upcoming PS2 RoboCop game "could be the most accomplished first-person shooter to grace the PS2 to date". This may have been a bit of a premature claim, as the game enjoys a Metacritic rating of 30%. We'll just ignore that one.



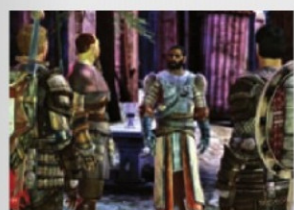
The previews of nine years ago were a very different world to what we know and love these days, covering the likes of a new Spider-Man game – what are the odds?! – and putting a poor Top Gun pun in the standfirst of its preview – who'd a thunk it?! Oh, wait, no – we're exactly the same as we were nine years ago.

Reviews in the world of yesteryear read like fevered dreams to our future-brains – they actually had a review of something called 'Gran Turismo 3', somehow, and they put 91% at the end of it. Batman: Gotham City Racer, on the other hand, received a bit of a kicking and had the wonderful number 9% put at the end of its words.



Elsewhere in the mag we had previews of a little two things called Twisted Metal: Black and Silent Hill 2, as well as a competition to win a 'Ministry Of Sound experience', whatever that's supposed to be. This, of course, was all wrapped around a wonderful interview with the creators of Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within and a massive guide to Red Faction. The end.

GAMING CLICHES & VIDEOGAME LOGIC



RPG Quests

PICTURE THE SCENE: you enter a local public house, the usual gathering of freaks and geeks are in place, chattering away to each other. You sidle over to the bar and ask the barkeep if you could perhaps get hold of a stein of mead (or 'pint of lager', if you must). Unfortunately the barman says this isn't possible, because there have been issues with replenishing stock – he offers that if you were to speak to a nearby, sad-looking patron you might be able to get more details. Obviously you do so straight away – after all, being told to talk to odd strangers by the staff of a local pub is the first thing on our 'to do' list every single day.

Chatting to this solemn figure, it becomes apparent that the cause of the stock shortage is down to outside interference – namely, local bandits (or 'hoodies' as the papers now call them) have disrupted the supply line. The patron asks you to sort this disturbance out in whatever way you see fit: if you do so, you will be rewarded with a bag of gold (or '£10') and all the free mead/lager you can carry in your belly.



Should you accept this charge in real life, you'd be dead within the hour. Or you'd just use a roundabout method to get it sorted and call the police. In games, though, every problem that exists stays ever-present and unsolved until you do something about it. Honestly, if the real world was like this it would be a much worse place – we're far too lazy to actually *do* things for people. Though being rewarded with gold, instead of an email that says 'thanks a lot' in it, would be an interesting prospect.

game issue score

PS STORE LISTING



1942: Joint Strike	170	74%
3-On-3 NHL Arcade	177	62%
After Burner Climax	193	91%
Classic, frantic and utterly brilliant arcade action from Sega. A fine example of what the company is best known for.		
Age Of Booty	172	81%
Aqua Panic	193	68%
Battlefield 1943	182	89%
Bishi Bashi Special!	175	61%
Bionic Commando Rearmed	169	88%
Blast Factor	152	72%
Blue Toad Murder Files: The Mysteries Of Little Riddle Episode I	188	65%
Blue Toad Murder Files: The Mysteries Of Little Riddle Episode II	188	61%
Blue Toad Murder Files Episodes 4/5/6	193	70%
Bomberman Ultra	185	82%
Braid	188	93%
We had to wait quite a while, but time is what we have plenty of both with and for <i>Braid</i> . Simply brilliant.		
Burn Zombie Burn	178	85%
Call Of Duty Classic	188	90%
Calling All Cars	155	81%
Comet Crash	186	84%
Command & Conquer: Red Alert	168	70%
Command & Conquer Red Alert: Retaliation	176	55%
Command & Conquer Red Alert 3: Commander's Challenge	185	68%
Command & Conquer	175	44%
Cool Boarders	173	57%
Cool Boarders 2	175	31%
Crash Bandicoot	172	77%
Crash Bandicoot 3: Warped	174	82%
Crash Commando	174	80%
Crash Team Racing	170	79%
Critter Crunch	188	91%
Crystal Defenders	184	48%
Dark Mist	164	53%
Destruction Derby	01	80%
.detuned	186	50%
Digger HD	186	52%
Diner Dash	190	66%
Driver	171	90%
With the most cinematic car chases ever seen in a game, <i>Driver</i> made a huge impact in 1998. Despite rosey graphics, it's still a playable title.		
Droplitz	184	91%
echochrome	169	85%
Elefunk	170	45%
Everybody's Golf 2	62	83%
Fade To Black	09	44%
Fat Princess	183	65%
Fatal Inertia EX	168	65%
FIFA 09 Ultimate Team	178	61%
Final Fight: Double Impact	193	90%
This scrolling-fighter classic from 1989 makes an almost faultless appearance on PSN. Stick it on your download list.		
Final Fantasy VII	181	96%
Even after all these years it still holds up. In fact, our mark seems to have gone up 3% since 1997.		
Final Fantasy VIII	190	90%
Flock!	179	70%
f1Ow	151	90%
Flower	176	85%
Frogger Returns	190	35%
G-Police	27	84%
Geon	175	71%
Go! Puzzle	152	58%
Gran Turismo HD	150	75%

game issue score

Gravity Crash	187	85%
Greed Corp	191	75%
GTI Club+	174	72%
Gunstar Heroes	181	85%
Hardcore 4x4	15	81%
Hasbro Family Game Night	187	60%
Heavy Weapon	187	75%
High Velocity Bowling	163	50%
Hi-Octane	178	64%
Hustle Kings	190	87%
Hyperbolloid HD	188	70%
Inferno Pool	181	81%
International Track & Field	171	80%
Interpol: The Trail Of Doctor Chaos	185	48%
Invincible Tiger: The Legend Of Han Tao	185	70%
Jet Rider 2	176	71%
Judge Dredd	18	19%
Jumping Flash	172	55%
Kula World	172	71%
Lead & Gold: Gangs Of The Wild West	193	65%
Lemmings	151	79%
Linger In Shadows	173	69%
LocoRoco Cocoreccho!	159	80%
Lumines Supernova	178	90%
Madden NFL Arcade	188	58%
Magic Carpet	179	65%
Marvel Vs Capcom 2	182	90%
Matt Hazard: Blood Bath And Beyond	189	69%
MediEvil	173	45%
Mega Man 9	172	75%
Mega Man 10	192	82%
Metal Gear Solid	187	93%
While it looks rather rough now, the game itself remains a real high point in the franchise. Simply essential.		
Metal Gear Solid Online	175	45%
Motorhead	173	60%
Namco Museum Essentials	193	60%
Noby Noby Boy	177	85%
Nucleus	155	82%
Numblast	183	60%
N20	37	70%
OutRun Online Arcade	180	80%
Pain	183	69%
Peggle	189	94%
So addictive it should come with some sort of government warning. Terrific value for money and a superb little puzzle game.		
PixelJunk Eden	169	67%
PixelJunk Monsters	163	94%
The second game in the <i>PixelJunk</i> series is great fun and brilliantly addictive. Buy it and play it constantly for hours on end!		
PixelJunk Shooter	187	93%
Q-Games delivers excellence on the PSN once again with its <i>PixelJunk</i> series, this time in the form of a classic shoot-'em-up.		
Piyotama	162	62%
Polar Panic	190	65%
Populous: The Beginning	46	70%
Prince Of Persia Classic	173	67%
Puzzle Quest Galactrix	181	68%
Q*bert	58	53%
Rag Doll Kung Fu: Fists Of Plastic	179	83%
Rampage: World Tour	29	77%
Ratchet & Clank: Quest For Booty	170	69%
Rayman	01	76%
Revenge Of The Wounded Dragons	191	60%
Riff: Everyday Shooter	162	86%
Rocketmen: Axis Of Evil	165	63%
Savage Moon	175	87%
Section 8	193	78%
Shatter	183	91%
Sheep	171	78%
Siren Blood Curse	170	62%
Smash Cars	184	50%
SOCOM Confrontation	178	55%
Spin Jam	174	32%

game issue score

Syphon Filter	48	93%
Snakeball	176	92%
Star Trek: D-A-C	189	57%
Street Fighter Alpha: Warrior's Dream	159	57%
Street Skater 2	178	40%
Super Puzzle Fighter II HD Turbo Remix	168	78%
Super Rub-A-Dub	151	83%
Supersonic Acrobatic Rocket-Powered Battle-Cars	177	65%
Super Stardust HD	155	74%
Super Street Fighter II Turbo HD Remix	176	72%
Switchball	191	75%
Syphon Filter 3	170	80%
Tank Battles	186	68%
Tekken HD	150	80%
Tekken 5: Dark Resurrection Online	161	87%
The Last Guy	171	91%
Snake meets Pac-Man meets GoogleMaps. <i>The Last Guy</i> is yet another innovative and compelling addition to the PSN's line-up.		
The Punisher: No Mercy	182	49%
Theme Hospital	32	80%
Theme Park	174	80%
TMNT: Turtles in Time Re-shelled	186	57%
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six	54	34%
Topotai: Spinning Through The Worlds	183	61%
ToyHome	162	31%
Trash Panic	181	79%
Trials Of Topaq	159	50%
Trine	184	85%
Uno	189	85%
Vagrant Story	189	82%
Vandal Hearts: Flames Of Judgment	192	87%
Wakeboarding HD	192	65%
Warhawk: Operation Fallen Star	171	80%
Watchmen: The End Is Nigh	183	55%
WipEout	01	89%
WipEout HD	172	84%
Wolfenstein	181	70%
Worms	179	91%
Zuma	182	78%


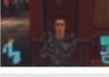


PSP LISTING



300: March To Glory	152	59%
Ace Combat X	147	72%
After Burner: Black Falcon	152	82%
Ape Academy	134	44%
Ape Academy 2	145	52%
Ape Escape P	140	37%
Army Of Two: The 40th Day	190	45%
Assassin's Creed: Bloodlines	187	77%
Astonishia Story	142	68%
Beaterator	186	72%
Blade Dancer: Lineage Of Light	145	45%
Blood Bowl	184	53%
Bomberman	150	83%
Boulder Dash: Rocks!	165	69%
Breath Of Fire III	138	82%
Brothers In Arms: D-Day	149	69%
Burnout Dominator	153	65%
Burnout Legends	134	94%
Despite being more of a 'best of' than a completely new game, <i>Legends</i> is the best racing game on the PSP.		
Buzz! Brain Bender	175	68%
Capcom Classics Collection Reloaded	147	80%
Capcom Classics Collection Remixed	141	72%
Cars	143	60%
Castlevania: The Dracula X Chronicles	163	78%
Championship Manager	137	65%
Championship Manager 2006	140	32%
Cid The Dummy	180	32%
Coded Arms	134	53%
Call Of Duty: Roads To Victory	153	69%
Colin McRae Rally 2005 Plus	134	84%

game	issue	score
Crisis Core – Final Fantasy VII	167	87%
Crush	154	80%
Dante's Inferno	191	76%
Dead Or Alive: Paradise	192	56%
Disgaea: Afternoon Of Darkness	161	92%
 <p>An absolute must-have for RPG fans, and one of the best titles available on the PSP. A simply brilliant game.</p>		
Dissidia: Final Fantasy	184	60%
Disgaea 2: Dark Hero Days	190	87%
Dragon Ball Z: Shin Budokai 2	154	50%
Driver 76	154	68%
Dungeons & Dragons: Tactics	159	55%
Dungeon Siege: Throne Of Agony	148	85%
Dynasty Warriors: Strikeforce	179	69%
EA Replay	147	74%
echochrome	169	85%
echoshift	191	73%
Everybody's Golf 2	167	86%
Every Extend Extra	145	84%
Exit	138	65%
F1 2009	187	66%
F1 Grand Prix	134	81%
Field Commander	145	83%
FIFA 06	136	43%
FIFA 07	147	81%
FIFA World Cup 2010	193	65%
Fired Up	134	60%
Final Fantasy	164	63%
Final Fantasy Tactics	159	86%
FlatOut: Head On	164	79%
Football Manager 2007	147	62%
Football Manager Handheld	139	82%
Football Manager Handheld 2008	161	49%
Football Manager Handheld 2010	187	60%
Formula One 06	143	78%
Frantix	136	36%
Gangs Of London	144	65%
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	157	42%
Ghostbusters: The Video Game	188	55%
Gitaroo Man Lives!	144	79%
Go! Sudoku	137	45%
God Of War: Chains Of Olympus	165	84%
Gradius Collection	144	80%
Gran Turismo	184	85%
Gripshift	136	81%
Grand Theft Auto: Chinatown Wars	185	95%
 <p>Bar some combat control issues, GTA: Chinatown Wars has perfectly translated to the PSP. It's a must-have game.</p>		
GTA: Liberty City Stories	135	95%
GTA: Vice City Stories	147	96%
 <p>Improving on its predecessor, the only way Vice City Stories could be topped is if San Andreas comes to the PSP.</p>		
Half-Minute Hero	191	87%
Harry Potter And The Goblet Of Fire	136	69%
Hellboy: Science Of Evil	170	60%
Holy Invasion Of Privacy, Badman! What Did I Do To Deserve This?	186	73%
Hot Pixel	155	73%
Indiana Jones And The Staff Of Kings	181	60%
Infected	141	68%
Innocent Life: A Futuristic Harvest Moon	154	70%
International Athletics	170	40%
Invizimals	187	71%
Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier	187	59%
Juiced: Eliminator	141	70%
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	160	80%
Kao Challengers	137	60%
Killzone: Liberation	146	83%
Lemmings	138	63%
LittleBigPlanet	186	90%
 <p>Refined in certain areas and slightly worse in Create mode but still a fantastic addition to PSP's lineup.</p>		

game	issue	score
LocoRoco	143	94%
 <p>We called this the definitive PSP title in our review, and it is a game that no PSP owner should be without.</p>		
LocoRoco 2	173	82%
LocoRoco Midnight Carnival	186	81%
Lumines II	137	74%
Madden NFL 06	137	74%
Marvel Trading Cards	155	38%
Me And My Katamari	138	86%
Metal Of Honor Heroes	147	72%
Medieval Resurrection	134	53%
Mercury Meltdown	145	66%
Metal Slug Anthology	150	91%
 <p>We're not too clued up on retro games, but we do know our Metal Slug and the Anthology is a great compilation.</p>		
Metal Gear Acid 2	138	92%
 <p>More card-based espionage starring everyone's favourite mullet-head, with funky new cel-shaded graphics.</p>		
Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker	193	92%
 <p>A fantastic entry in the Metal Gear Solid series and one of the best games on PSP. Wonderful.</p>		
Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops	150	91%
Miami Vice	144	82%
Micro Machines V4	142	71%
Midnight Club 3: DUB Edition	134	57%
ModNation Racers	193	70%
Monster Hunter Freedom	140	81%
Monster Hunter Freedom 2	157	59%
Monster Hunter Freedom Unite	181	77%
MotoGP	146	75%
Motorstorm: Arctic Edge	184	72%
Mytran Wars	179	85%
Namco Museum Battle Collection	136	68%
Naruto Shippuden Legends: Akatsuki Rising	185	46%
Naruto Ultimate Ninja Heroes 2	169	46%
NBA Ballers: Rebound	139	61%
Need For Speed Undercover	175	57%
Need For Speed Most Wanted	136	73%
OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast	139	93%
PaRappa The Rapper	155	88%
Patapon	163	86%
Patapon 2	177	87%
Patchwork Heroes	192	85%
Pirates Of The Caribbean	143	52%
PixelJunk Monster Deluxe	185	86%
Pro Evolution Soccer 2008	163	77%
Pocket Racers	144	49%
PoPoLoCrois	142	71%
Power Stone Collection	145	88%
PQ – Practical Intelligence Quotient	141	52%
Prince Of Persia Revelations	138	69%
Prinny: Can I Really Be The Hero?	181	80%
PSN Collection: Power Pack	173	70%
PSN Collection: Puzzle Pack	173	54%
Pursuit Force	134	83%
Pursuit Force: Extreme Justice	159	76%
Puzzle Chronicles	190	61%
Puzzle Quest	153	66%
R-Type Tactics	170	74%
Rainbow Six Vegas	156	78%
Ratchet & Clank: Size Matters	154	78%
Rengoku 2	144	72%
Resistance: Retribution	177	76%
Ridge Racer 2	145	78%
Ridge Racer	132	91%
 <p>Arguably the best launch game on the PSP, Ridge Racer still stands up as one of the finest racing games for</p>		
Rock Band Unplugged	181	92%
Rocky Balboa	150	68%
Secret Agent Clank	169	79%
Sega Mega Drive Collection	177	79%

game	issue	score
Sega Rally	158	90%
Shinobido: Tales Of The Ninja	150	60%
Silent Hill Origins	160	87%
Silent Hill: Shattered Memories	190	52%
Smash Court Tennis	154	58%
SOCOM Fire Team 2	154	70%
SOCOM: Fireteam Bravo 3	190	71%
SOCOM: Tactical Strike	160	85%
SOCOM: US Navy SEALs Fireteam Bravo	140	69%
Sonic Rivals	147	70%
Sonic Rivals 2	162	35%
Soul Calibur: Broken Destiny	183	92%
 <p>New modes and characters keep things interesting, while fights are as hectic and solid as ever.</p>		
Spider-Man 3	162	32%
Spinout	149	81%
Splinter Cell: Essentials	139	71%
SSX On Tour	138	76%
Star Ocean: Second Evolution	178	78%
Star Trek: Tactical Assault	148	59%
Star Wars Battlefront II	137	74%
Star Wars Battlefront: Elite Squadron	187	65%
Star Wars: Lethal Alliance	148	69%
Star Wars: Renegade Squadron	160	78%
Street Fighter Alpha 3 Max	138	70%
Street Riders	140	29%
Super Monkey Ball Adventure	142	54%
Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror	140	90%
 <p>In the absence of a 'real' MGS game, it's left to Gabe Logan to carry the stealthy torch, and he does a fine job.</p>		
Syphon Filter: Logan's Shadow	161	84%
Tales Of Eternia	138	85%
Tales Of The World	158	56%
Taito Legends	145	64%
Tekken 6	187	90%
Tekken: Dark Resurrection	143	92%
 <p>Tekken: Dark Resurrection is instantly playable and provides the PSP's first great brawler.</p>		
Tenchu: Shadow Assassins	179	71%
Tenchu: Time Of The Assassins	146	51%
The Con	153	59%
The Cube	153	64%
The Eye Of Judgment: Legends	191	57%
The Godfather Mob Wars	136	66%
The Lord Of The Rings: Tactics	136	66%
The Sims 2	137	71%
TNA Impact! Cross The Line	189	58%
TOCA 3	152	70%
Tokobot	140	79%
Tomb Raider: Anniversary	156	81%
Tomb Raider: Legend	140	72%
Twisted Metal Head-On	134	54%
Ultimate Ghosts 'N Goblins	145	88%
Undead Knights	189	46%
Untold Legends: The Warrior's Code	140	59%
Valhalla Knights	158	49%
Valkyrie Profile: Lenneth	153	78%
Viewtiful Joe: Red Hot Rumble	140	82%
Virtua Tennis 3	152	88%
Warhammer 40,000: Squad Command	161	70%
What Did I Do To Deserve This My Lord? 2	192	78%
WipeOut Pulse	159	86%
WipeOut Pure	138	91%
 <p>Exceeding all of our expectations as to what a handheld WipeOut game could be, Pure is an essential PSP purchase.</p>		
World Of Pool	156	43%
World Tour Poker	141	67%
World Tour Soccer 2	142	40%
Worms: Open Warfare 2	157	80%
WWE SmackDown! Vs. RAW 2006	137	84%
WWE SmackDown! Vs. RAW 2007	147	80%
World Rally Championship	134	67%

*denotes import review



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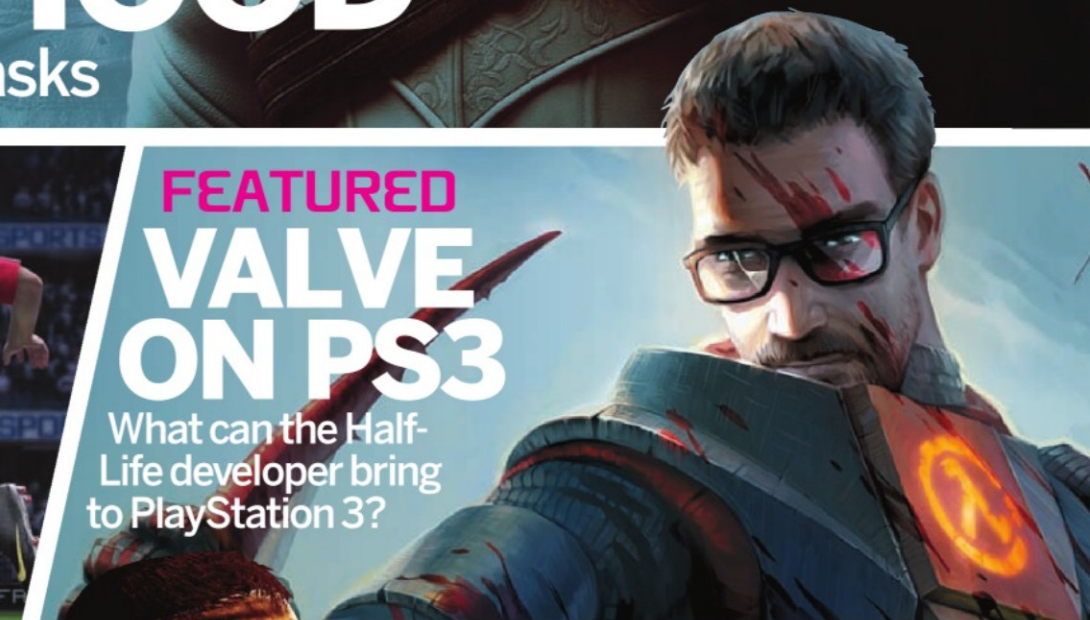
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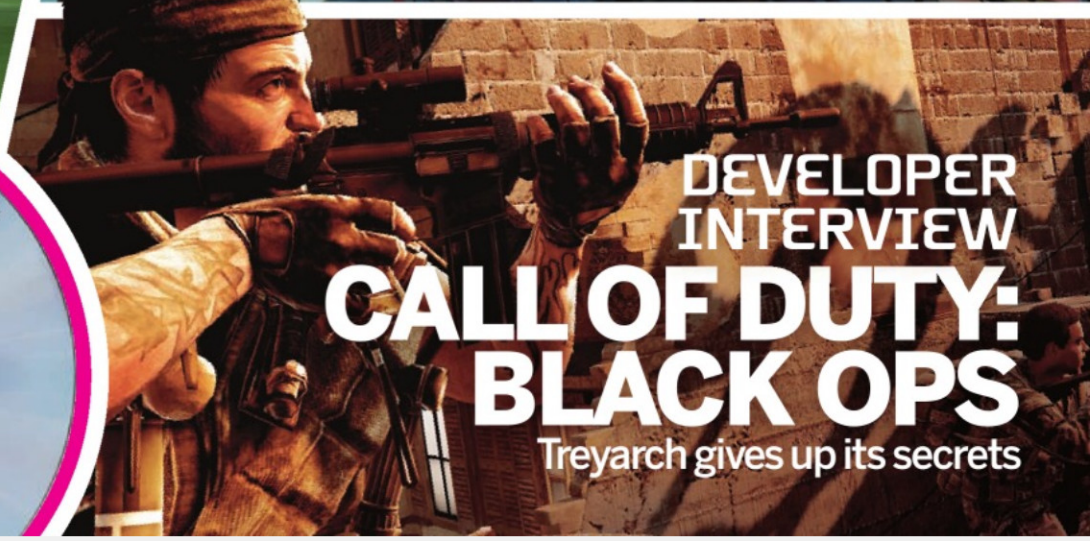
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SPIDER-MAN: SCATTERED DIMENSIONS

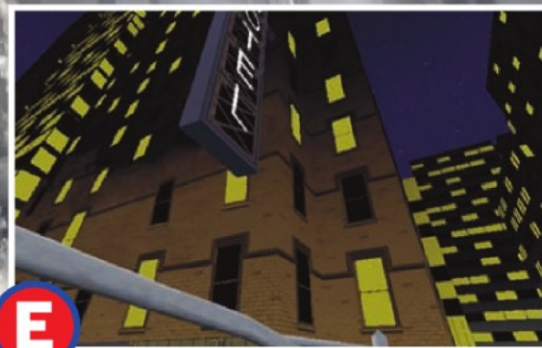
OH FLIPPIN' 'ECK! Spider-Man's dimensions have got all shattered, with catastrophic results. Not only does this mean the next *Spider-Man* game will feature a variety of different versions of Spider-Man based on different *Spider-Man* comic universes, it also means that the Spider-Men from old *Spider-Man* games have got separated from their *Spider-Man* game environments. Only one hero has what it takes to deal with this crisis... no, not Spider-Man... YOU!

Below you will find five environments from old *Spider-Man* games marked A-E, and five versions of Spider-Man from old *Spider-Man* games marked 1-5. Your job is to match the Spider-Men to the environments. If you're really hardcore, you could cut out the Spider-Men and stick them onto the environments with glue, but don't feel you have to.

THE OLD GAMES ARE...

Spider-Man 2: Enter Electro
Spider-Man: The Movie
Spider-Man 2
Ultimate Spider-Man
Spider-Man: Web Of Shadows

Two of them are easy, the other three really hard. Answers upside down at the bottom of the page.



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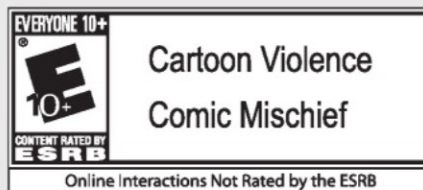
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